The SENIOR LIEUTENANT'S WAGER

and Other Stories

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AND OTHER STORIES.

Stories by the Foremost Catholic Writers.

THE SENIOR LIEUTENANT'S WAGER

AND OTHER STORIES

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THE SENIOR LIEUTENANT'S WAGER.

BY MARY G. BONESTEEL.

THE tropical moon shone down with soft brilliancy on the nearby paddy fields, thickly covered with the growing rice; it turned the dirty, weather-stained tents of "G" company of the "steenth" regulars into a long line of silvery, gleaming white; it threw into sharp relief the blue-shirted figures of the pickets on outpost duty.

It was a peaceful scene, only disturbed by the call of "All's well!" and the rattle of rifles as their owners shifted the heavy "Krags" from one shoulder to another. The moonlight fell softly upon two people who were on the broad veranda of the Presidente's bungalow. One of them, a tall, blond young officer, was walking nervously back and forth, while, reclining on a low, native wicker couch, the Presidente's pretty daughter, Mercedes, sang a passionate Spanish love song.

The Senora Presidente, well inside the inclosed entrance, chaperoned them most unwillingly. The new state of affairs met with her thorough disapproval; the Americanos and their ways were not her ways. Was it not a well-known fact that the light of the moon was deadly? But since the Americanos had come Mercedes would not listen to reason. She not only sat in the moonlight, but with young men, too, and Carmita and Rosalie, her best friends in the village, did likewise. So the poor Senora, a mute protest against the new order of things, sat in the depths of her comfortable chair; but a gentle snore now and then assured the young people of a relaxed surveillance, which, indeed, had never proved in the least bit formidable, as Mercedes and the Senior Lieutenant

invariably conversed in Americano, Mercedes' pretty, broken English being of an adorable quality, which translated common speech into softest music.

"If I could only get one good look at the rascal," the young officer exclaimed, vehemently. "Cunning and slippery as he is, I'll wager I'd capture him safely enough inside of ten days."

"Who is it, Senor, that has so aroused your usual most amiable temper?"

"Oh! I forgot, Mercedes, to tell you of this order from Division Headquarters. It only came in to-night's mail. Acedillo is the fellow's name—a captain of the Insurrectos. Those people down in Manila order me to bring him in dead or alive. Very easy for them, in a comfortable office, to order us poor devils out on impossible 'hikes.' The secret service police report that the man has been seen here in San Pedro. Well, if he tries it again, I'll have him."

"So? Yes, I see," murmured the girl, "there must be a traitor somewhere."

"Of course, there always is," responded the Lieutenant, "but, as I said, give me one good look at him, and Acedillo's raiding days are over."

A gleam of amused daring leaped into Mercedes' eyes.

"What will you give me, Senor Lieutenant," she murmured, softly, "if I give you the chance to recognize this rascal insurgent?"

"Anything you ask, Mercedes," was the eager reply.

"*Anything,* Senor?" with a languishing upward look from her glorious eyes.

The girl's beauty, the Spanish love song, the glorious moonlight, all went to the young fellow's head like wine.

"Darling," he began, fervently. The girl stopped him with a pretty, imperative gesture.

"Anything but your heart and hand, I understand, Senor. Those are given to the little Americano girl whose portrait you carry in that locket."

The Senior Lieutenant had the grace to look ashamed of him-

self; but he thought, with secret complacency, "Poor Mercedes, I must be careful. It won't do to have her care too much for me. *I* don't want to break her heart."

"Forgive me," he said aloud, "it is true. I am promised."

"I know, I know," murmured Mercedes, in a voice seemingly choked with emotion. "I have seen her picture. She is beautiful —far more so than poor me."

The young man began to feel decidedly foolish and uncomfortable, but the worst of it was he had brought it all on himself. The situation was growing somewhat strained when the Senora suddenly awakened herself with a louder snore than usual.

"Buenos noches, Senor Teniente," she murmured, sleepily. Whereupon the young officer laughed, but prepared to take the hint. As he held Mercedes' little hand in a lingering good-night she said, archly, with a sudden and complete change of manner:

"*I* will give you the so longed for chance to capture that rascal insurgent capitaine"— Mercedes' broken English was delicious—"but I make you two conditions: first, you no ask any question, which is hard. The second condition is easy. You promise me, dance with me at my wedding."

The Lieutenant looked bewildered, as well he might.

"Your wedding, Mercedes?" he stammered. "I did not know you were engaged."

"Why should you?" was the calm reply. "It is not made public yet. I tell you, my friend, the first of all."

"And when is your wedding to take place?"

"The conditions, remember—no questions," laughed the girl.

Lieutenant Winston felt very flat indeed. For days he had been rather sorry for the pretty little Mestiza, whom he had imagined breaking her heart over him. He had fully intended drawing out of his affair with her gradually, so as not to wound her sensitive nature, and here she coolly announced her engagement.

"Come, come, Lieutenant," she cried. "Does my news make you dumb? Your promise—do you agree to my conditions?"

Winston hesitated. There was something in the girl's manner he did not understand.

The Senora Presidente stirred uneasily and began to remove her ponderous form from the depths of her easy-chair. The sentries were calling, "Twelve o'clock and all is well." It was very late—for San Pedro—so the Senior Lieutenant, with a hasty "I promise," started away.

"One moment, Senor," cried Mercedes. Then out on the still night air rang her glorious voice in the "Star Spangled Banner." Winston paused, uncovered, and stood in silence, while the girl sang through one verse. As she finished, from the other side of the Pasig, came a long-drawn, weird note.

"The Filipino night bird," explained Mercedes.

"I never heard it before," replied Winston.

"No? Well, it cries out often; it is because you did not notice; you will, now."

And Winston did; night after night, at intervals, the bird's wailing cry would be repeated.

"Good night, Senorita."

Mercedes watched the tall, straight young figure until the tented street swallowed it up and she heard the sentry challenge him loudly.

Her mother came out on the porch, uneasy. "I like not, Mercedes, that promised as you are, you should play with the heart of this kind young man."

"Play with *his* heart," smiled the girl, scornfully. "Let me whisper you a secret: it is *my* heart that kind young man thinks to make a plaything of; I will teach him a lesson, for his own sake, for I like him well, and also for the girl at home, a girl like me."

* * * * *

"Stubbs," remarked the Senior Lieutenant, as he entered their tent, "a champagne supper against five hundred Alhambras that I capture Acedillo inside of two weeks."

"There's a woman in it," grunted Stubbs, skeptically. He knew where his Senior had spent this evening, and many others.

"I'm giving you such odds, betting on a sure thing," explained the Senior.

"Humph!" was the only comment.

"I'll do it even in cigars—a thousand 'Torpedoes,' and what I save on my cigars we'll drop in the Padre's poor-box."

It was a busy time for the detachment holding down the little village of San Pedro. Both young officers were constantly on the "hike," searching for rifles and ammunition, and the wily Insurrecto. Ten days slipped by, and somehow the Senior Lieutenant had not had a moment's private conversation with Mercedes; he almost imagined she had positively avoided him.

One morning one of the Presidente's "muchatoes," clean of face and feet, resplendent in fresh white duck, brought to the tent of the young officers a formal invitation from the Presidente to the wedding of his daughter.

"What day does the 'chit'* name, Jack?" asked Stubbs, the Second Lieutenant, of his dazed-looking Senior.

"To-morrow," was the laconic reply.

"Shall I save you the trouble, and order my cigars, old fellow?" grinned Stubbs, with an exasperating "I told you so" air.

"Oh, hang the cigars, and you, too!" and the senior officer strode off to examine his short picket line, where he made his men's life a burden for the next hour.

"He doesn't mention the groom's name," remarked Stubbs to himself, as he glanced again over the invitation. "I believe Jack is rather hard hit. I'm glad he's well out of it. No Filipinos in mine if you please—I wouldn't trust one of them."

The sun shone brightly on Mercedes' wedding-day. It was to be a "fiesta" for the entire village, and the soldiers, too.

The church was gay with flags and flowers, these last artificial, and the Stars and Stripes fluttered from every nipa hut along the route of the wedding procession.

The bride was gloriously beautiful in pale pink silk, veil, and orange blossoms. Leaning on her father's arm she headed the procession to the church—a motley following of relatives, khaki-clad soldiers, and Filipinos. The Nuptial Mass was at 8 o'clock. The two officers, in immaculate white ducks, were given the place of honor immediately behind the bride.

* Note or letter.

"How sweetly simple and beautifully primitive these native ceremonies are," remarked Stubbs, softly.

"Oh, shut up, do," was the rejoinder. "Don't rub it in any more than you can help."

At the church door the bridegroom met them. It was the first time the American officers had seen him. He was a tall, handsome, well-built young fellow, clad in well-fitting white linens.

"A good-looking chap—looks a gentleman," was Stubbs' approving comment, but his senior vouchsafed no reply.

The long ceremony of the Nuptial Mass seemed never ending. The Americano officers had been given places of prominence along with the bride's family, so even had they wished, it would have been impossible to leave. After Mass came a banquet, at which numerous toasts were drunk. All afternoon the band played, while the humbler natives feasted, drank, and climbed greased poles. At eight the "baile" began, opened by the bride and groom.

Stubbs did his duty so energetically that he melted a dozen collars before the evening was half over, but the Senior Lieutenant sat out on the piazza and sulked. Here Mercedes found him.

"Come, Senor, come. You gave me your promise to dance with me at my wedding," she cried gaily.

"Certainly. I am at your service," was the stiff reply, "Madam—I have not been able to catch your new name."

"No matter—it will keep. You may use the old one just for to-night." She smiled coquettishly as they swung into the circle of waltzers.

At the first pause the Senior Lieutenant said, reproachfully: "Ah, Mercedes, I have kept my promise, though with a heavy heart. I have danced at your wedding, but you have not kept faith with me."

"I will keep my promise, too, Senor. I have not forgotten."

"When?" was the eager question.

"At midnight." The young officer looked puzzled, but not another word could Mercedes be induced to say.

At midnight the ancient brass grandfather's clock, with its

quaint procession of medieval saints, began chiming out its twelve strokes. The Presidente arose and asked his guests to drink long life and prosperity to the bridal pair. Just then Mercedes entered, but alone. With a swift glance at the Senior Lieutenant, she said quietly:

"Our guests will pardon the sudden departure of my husband. We will drink the toast nevertheless. Captain Acedillo requests me to make his apologies and his regrets."

Like a flash the situation was made clear to the Senior Lieutenant.

"Acedillo!" he fairly shouted in his amazement and wrath. "Stubbs, you can sprint. Take the patrol and after him."

"Make it two thousand, Jack?" was the junior's only remark as he vanished. In the meantime the Presidente was raving at his daughter.

"You wicked one!" he stormed, shaking his fist at Mercedes, who was perfectly undismayed. "You wicked girl, you have betrayed your family for a piece of foolishness. We are lost, lost!"

But the young officer stopped him.

"The Senora has taught me a valuable lesson," he said, with dignity.

"No one will suffer for this—this mistake, but myself. Allow me to say good evening," and off he marched, vanquished, but with the honors of war.

FATHER JAMES' SNUFF BOX.

BY H. J. CARROLL.

"WHY do I snuff?" said Father James, as if echoing my question. "Well, I'll tell you a story about this little silver box, which may help you to overcome your aversion for this habit of mine. At one time I was a very heavy smoker, so much so that the weed began to undermine my health, but I could not stop—to use a cant phrase—hitting up the pipe. A friend of mine advised me to try snuffing. I didn't like the idea, but I followed his advice and by degrees was able to stop smoking.

"About the fifth year after I first entered upon my mission, I was sent to a little village called Gray, in Herkimer County, New York. My little flock was scattered for miles around, being mostly composed of farmers. Catholics were in a minority in this district, though the Protestants were for the most part honest, hard-working people, who knew how to mind their own business. I was called out late one night on a sick call to a farmhouse about two and one-half miles from the rectory. On such occasions I usually took Mike, the hired man, with me, but on this night he was not at home, which was a very unusual occurrence; so I had to make the journey alone. Having hitched up the horse and buggy, I took the Blessed Sacrament and started out.

"The night was very cloudy, and I knew that if I did not hurry I would be caught in the storm, but my horse was tired after having traveled twenty miles that day, so that my progress was comparatively slow. I had covered about half the distance when the storm broke out. The road became intensely dark, so that the lantern only served to make the darkness visible. It was

a night on which children are wont to sit around the old-fashioned fireplace in the farmhouse, and listen to ghost stories, and shiver and are afraid to go to bed. I could scarcely see the horse's head, and the shaggy mane in the darkness made it appear like some weird phantom coming forth from long-forgotten childhood lore. Suddenly the horse stopped, nor could I make him move another step. What could be the matter with him? I could see nothing on the road ahead. Just then a flash of lightning illumined the scene, and I beheld a masked man holding the horse by the check-line. I stood up and yelled:

"'What do you mean by stopping my horse? Let go immediately.' I was trying to keep my voice from shaking when some one at my side said:

"'Come, Father, we don't want to injure you, unless you force us to do it. Just hand it over.' Imagine my surprise when I beheld another masked man standing on the buggy step pointing a revolver at me!

"'Hand what over?' I asked. In turning round I accidentally struck the lantern with my whip, scattering the pieces of glass over the seat and into the road; this happened to be a very fortunate occurrence, though I did not think so at the time.

"'Come on,' said the robber at my side. 'You know what I mean. Hand over what you brought along for that old sick crone. And be quick, too.'

"'But, I assure you,' I returned, 'I have not the least idea what you are talking about. If it is my pocketbook you are after you may have it willingly, though it does not contain much, you will find.'

"'Oh! come off,' he returned, 'we don't want your money. Give us that piece of round white stuff you have with you.'

"'What good will that do you?' I said.

"'Hand it over,' he commanded, 'we don't want any of your tricks. I'll give you five minutes to think it over.'

"I racked my brain trying to think of some way to get out of this snare, but in vain.

"'Go on, hurry up! The five minutes are almost up,' he

yelled, and turning to his companion, said, 'Let the horse alone and get a lantern quick. We'll fix him in a second.'

"I had a chance now, the other being gone. I might be able to outwit this fellow. Just then I thought of my snuff box, and pulling it out I said:

"'Here it is, as long as you are bound to get it.'

"I opened the box, and he bent down to look at it. As he did so I threw the contents into his face. He dropped the pistol and started to rub his eyes, cursing and swearing fearfully. Grabbing the revolver I pointed it at him and bade him sit next to me; he did so, shivering with fright. I threatened him with the pistol, made him grab the reins, and, the horse being rested, dashed ahead at full speed, just as I saw a lantern gleaming down the road. A few pistol shots followed. I had trouble with my prisoner, but I reached the next farmhouse in safety. The owner was fortunately one of my parishioners, and by dint of shouting, I brought help in the shape of four stalwart young farmers, who bound the prisoner, one of them going with me; the rest went in search of the other robber.

"Next day Mike, the hired man, came home, attended by a doctor. I went up to his room and found him lying on the bed, his head covered with bandages.

"'Mike,' queried I, 'how did you get those cuts?'

"'Father,' says he, 'I have been waiting for you all morning, to tell you how this happened, for it concerns the encounter I heard you had last night. When I left here to go to my sister's house, I was accosted by two strangers who asked me if I were not the hired man at the rectory. I told them that I was.'

"'"Well," said the elder of the two, "we have a little business to transact with you."

"'"You have?" said I. "Well, come ahead; there is no time like the present."

"'"Come up to my hotel room," said the spokesman. So I went up; they passed the cigars and wine, but I refused the latter, at which they scowled.

"'"Well," continued he, "we will make it worth your while

if you will let us know when his Reverence is about to go on a sick call."

"'"I don't know anything about Father James' sick calls, and if I did I would not tell you. You can go to him and ask him yourself; if he sees fit to tell you any of his business, that is his own affair," said I.

"'"You usually accompany him on such errands, do you not?" he remarked. I answered in the affirmative.

"'"Well," said he, "I'll tell you why we want to know this. We want to get hold of the thing you call 'Host,' and see what it is made of. We belong to a society that has for its object the extermination of priests and popish trickery. If you tell us when his Reverence is going on his next sick call, we will give you five thousand dollars. You need not think you can trick us by saying yes, and then not keep your promise, as we are protected by the law, and it is impossible for you to have us arrested."

"'I believed them, like the fool I was, and said:

"'"I think you've got the wrong tool this time, old fellow." As I said this some one rapped me on the head from behind, and I knew no more until I found myself here this morning.'

"'Well, Mike, we can only thank God that they did not succeed and that you are not killed, for they certainly left you there in the belief that you were dying, and they surely would have murdered you on the spot, if they thought you would recover, for they are desperate characters. But we have one of them in our custody, and we will put him where he will not be able to commit any more robbery for some time to come. I do not believe that any of the people of the village were at the bottom of this attempt at robbery; I rather think they were a pair of fanatics who thought they were accomplishing something extraordinary in annoying their Catholic neighbors.'

"The prisoner confessed at the trial that he attempted to rob me, and revealed the name of his colleague, and both were sent to Sing Sing for ten years. Both of them, strange to say, were prosperous business men in a village about thirty miles west of Gray, so that it must have been simply fanaticism that led them

to attempt the robbery. But you may be assured that I never again went out on such an occasion without Mike as a companion, and he was always armed. I was nicknamed 'The Constable Priest' from that time forward.

"I was stationed at Gray for five years longer, but was never again molested. I keep this snuff box and would not part with it for any price, for if it had not been for that I would have been robbed of my priceless treasure. Even now I am scrupulous for having spoken so much on that eventful night. By the way, did you ever get any snuff in your eye? Well, then, be careful that you don't, for it burns like the mischief. Have a pinch?"

THE DREAM WARNING.

BY MRS. FRANCIS CHADWICK.

SOMEWHERE in the later sixties, a quiet couple, weary of the noise and excitement of New York, migrated to a Canadian city, now near to rivaling their former place of residence in the strenuous life and the feverish hunt for riches, but in those sleepy, unprogressive days, a very haven of peace to those seeking rest.

Relieved, by the possession of ample means, from the necessity of further endeavor, this very unambitious couple settled down contentedly, in a street secluded even in this quiet town, recalling the gayer past only through the advent of some American friend, who, ever warmly welcomed, was sure to carry away with him a picture of the perfect home life, never to be forgotten.

So peaceful and so charming a home it was; exquisite in its neatness, dainty in all its appointments, bright with growing plants that seemed to scorn the snow-wreaths outside; made cheerful by the sweet trill of the canary, the special pet and protégé of the master of the house, who, apparently stern and awe-inspiring to the many, showed the warmer side of his nature to a favored few and found place therein for a great tenderness toward the animal creation, which in his household consisted of Thady, the sleek cat, and Dick, the canary.

A quiet home indeed, where the striking of a silvery-voiced clock almost startled one, and the passing footfall resounded through the house, arousing a horde of speculations as to the identity of the passer-by.

Yet here reigned perfect happiness, the wife, tall, dark, and stately, a woman of that old school so nearly obsolete nowadays,

looked up to her still taller and commanding husband with a respect, one might almost say an awe, simply impossible to the woman of this time.

He, Henry Morton, was her king, who could do no wrong; his tastes were hers, his friends her friends.

This state of things was very much in the ordinary course half a century ago, and though we modern women stand emancipated from what many might be tempted to call slavery, it is to be doubted whether any of us succeed in so thoroughly keeping the respect and devotion which this silent, reserved woman received, in return for all her submission.

Mr. Morton was a man of quick temper, as became a leal son of Tipperary, yielding at times to prejudice; and given to a self-assertiveness very trying to the patience and combativeness of those about him, and herein lay his wife's ablest resource; she listened in diplomatic silence, and such is man's way that she often came out the gainer by her apparent loss.

Having nothing particular to do, and being of an energetic turn, Mr. Morton delighted in excuses for long strolls, and attended to most of the shopping, particularly the marketing, and became a very familiar figure in the old *Bonsecours* market, on the dark winter mornings when most of the world were comfortably sleeping, thus securing the "pick" of everything, and getting home by the time his helpmate was returning from Mass at the "French Church" in the square some blocks away, it being one of Mr. Morton's theories that women were "best at church," and "that sort of thing," while men faced the more sordid and unpleasant side of life.

Never, indeed, was there man who seemed so thoroughly to realize the meaning of that word cherish—so apparently forgotten by the ordinary husband; for even in the matter of her adornment he, to all appearances so far removed from frivolity, delighted in loading his wife with what men call millinery, adding constantly to a wardrobe ever full. On one occasion, seeing some particularly pretty embroidered dresses in a shop window, he went in, and sent no less than three to his wife. She looked, admired;

and, believing that he had sent the three on approbation, decided on a black-and-white dress, returning the two others, a blue and a lavender material. That evening Mr. Morton came home, and was met by his wife's grateful thanks for his lovely present.

"They were *all* very, very pretty," she said, "but I hope that you will think I did wisely in selecting the black-and-white. I asked the Boltons to call for the others; which they did, during the afternoon."

"Do you mean to say that you returned the dresses I sent you?" asked her irate lord in a fury. "As if I didn't know perfectly well what I wanted when I went into a shop to buy. Never do such a thing again, if you please." And I'm afraid he banged the door. It's a way they have when they're angry.

So the blue and lavender came solemnly back next day, and were ceremoniously hung up in an already crowded wardrobe; but the dignity of the master of the house was maintained, and that is always something.

Some of us youngsters who happened to be present on this occasion trembled a little, but Mrs. Morton merely smiled; far too well-pleased by her husband's pride in her appearance to criticize either his taste or his temper.

"I'll tell you what, Mrs. Morton," said Hugh Deane, the family friend, who spent part of every evening in the house and to whom they were both warmly attached. "Take good care of Morton. If he ever takes it into his head to die, you'll search the world in vain for his equal."

True words, carelessly spoken. Such hearts are indeed as rare as rubies!

Mr. Morton laughed immoderately at the joke, and every one joined in, unconscious that this earthly happiness was very near its term; that this pleasant household would soon cease to be.

Mr. and Mrs. Morton had been for some time planning a visit to a young relative of theirs, who, rather recently married, was living for a time, at least, in the most out-of-the-way place possible; far removed from any railway and only to be got at indirectly by the steamer passing to and from Europe. Their ar-

rangements had been made carefully, as was their methodical wont, when Mr. Morton coming in one day informed his wife that she was to go alone to visit her niece, as he found it would be utterly impossible for him to accompany her.

"I find that the house needs a good deal done to it," he said, standing with his back to her, and staring out of the window, "and I have decided to stay and overlook things."

"It is quite useless to argue," he went on, in answer to her remonstrances. "Quite useless; I could not think of letting you stay here at this time. It is altogether for the best."

During the days that followed, he simply rushed her through her packing, disappointed if anything seemed to interfere with her speedy departure; and on a lovely late summer morning saw her off; but not before he had installed the cat and bird at a friendly neighbor's, saying that something might happen to them among the strange workmen who were to take possession of the house.

Mrs. Morton was very much annoyed at being sent away in this rather cavalier fashion, but, as usual, made the best of things, got through her journey safely, and had already spent a week or ten days with her niece, much comforted for her exile by sundry letters from her husband, when she came down to breakfast one morning simply overcome by a strange dream she had had during the night.

"Kate," she said to her niece, "there is something wrong with Henry. Please don't argue with me. I am positive there is, and I want James to go at once, and see about the quickest way of getting to the steamer."

Her niece reasoned, scolded, advised her even to telegraph, and await an answer. All in vain.

"Go I *will*," she said, "on foot, if no other way can be found. But you will find some one," she said, "if you only try. Offer anything you like, and for any sort of conveyance, if they will only *hurry*.

"Oh, if you could only imagine that dream, Kate! I dreamt that I saw Henry, walking quietly along the street in the dusk,

when suddenly four dark forms advanced toward him, and appeared to attack him with knives. He fell to the ground, and I heard him call me in such a tone of agony that I woke, trembling from head to foot and in positive terror. It was still dark, and I lay there praying for the morning and that I should reach the mail boat in time."

By dint of scouring the outlying villages, a man was found, the possessor of a rickety buckboard, but a good, strong horse, and by a little after noon, Mrs. Morton set out on a wretched journey, over hills and down dales, at a pace which would have simply terrified her under any other circumstances, she being the most timid of women. Her thankfulness that she had got even thus far on her journey was redoubled when they met an Indian boy coming with a telegram for her.

It contained these few words, which might mean much or nothing.

"Mr. Morton not very well—fancy he misses you. Better you should come. Meet you at Quebec.

"HUGH DEANE."

"But for my dream I should not have been on my way," she thought. "How strange that I should have been warned in this way. How good God has been to me!"

Thus she thought and prayed, as they rushed along over this perilous semblance of a road, unheedful of the gathering darkness; until at last the habitant driver, raising his whip, pointed out the lights of the steamer which lay awaiting the mails at some distance from the shore.

"Dat's it now, madame. I guess I'm in good time all right. We're goin' stop right along dere down by dat pos'."

And in a few moments more Mrs. Morton was scrambling down the steep, rocky shore to the beach, where a number of men were busily tossing the mail-bags into a rowboat into which Baptiste, her driver, carefully helped her, and went back to his buckboard a far richer man than he had left it.

Mrs. Morton had been, all her life, morbidly afraid of boats, even under the happiest circumstances refusing to enter one—but she has often told us how she sat there utterly regardless of the wild waters and the darkness; nor scarcely remembered, afterward, how she was helped up a rope ladder to the deck of the ship. She recalls dimly a group of staring people among whom she passed to her cabin, where she lay, tensely, wide awake; watching for, yet dreading, the morning.

Then dawn, and a glorious crimson sunrise over the wharves at Quebec, and Hugh Deane's lonely figure pacing up and down, awaiting her. To her surprise, he greeted her with his usual cheerful smile; told her that Mr. Morton had a rather bad cold, and had seemed dull and lonely, and he knew she would like to be with him.

"So cheer up," he said. "You'll be home this evening, and I can promise you he'll be glad to see you."

Mrs. Morton was so much reassured, that as they drew near home she went to her cabin and changed her dress for one which her husband particularly liked, and came on deck again in time to land, thankful that her exile was over. Evening was settling down as they got into their cab; and the Angelus ringing from many steeples.

"See, Hugh!" she cried out suddenly, "the man seems to have mistaken the direction; he is turning the wrong way. Why don't you speak to him?"

"Wait a moment, Mrs. Morton," he said, laying his hand gently on her arm. "The man knows where he's going. Do you hear those bells? You know in whose honor they're ringing. Well, I want you to pray to her now for courage."

"What are you talking of?"

"Listen, Mrs. Morton. We are not going to your house. Mr. Morton is very seriously ill, and is at the hospital. He has been ill for a long time, but concealed it from you. There had to be an operation, and he sent you away on purpose—making me promise absolute secrecy until all was over. He was doing very well at first, then something went wrong, and the four doctors who

have him in charge told me I had better send for you. He hasn't been able to speak much, but the day before yesterday he seemed to want to say something, and I bent over him, and I just faintly heard your name. I said I would send for you, and he smiled and nodded his head. So the word is courage. You're a brave woman I know. The doctor says excitement will hasten—the end. We are turning up the street now. Say a prayer for strength. God will help."

The carriage drove slowly up the hill and to the hospital-gate, and the melancholy pair mounted this way of the cross as myriads had done before them, to that supreme test of human faith in God, the death-bed of the beloved.

"Thank God!" He could say that. No repining, no slightest murmur against that will which had given and was about to take away, but deep gratitude, that his wife was there beside him again for these last few seconds of his life. Blessed Irish faith, learned so long ago, in far-off, lonely Ireland—that can thus soothe the death-bed into such perfect peace!

"Oh, how could you, how could you treat me like this!" his wife cried on her knees beside him. "I who would have given my life to comfort you."

"No, no," he gasped. "It was the least I could do to spare you. I am ready to die," he whispered consolingly.

"Yes, yes, dearest; Hugh has told me."

"So now that you are with me all is well. I am—very—weak—to-day; but I will tell you all to-mor—"

The voice trailed away into unconsciousness, and then the endless silence which only eternity will break.

THE INVITATION.

BY LOUISA EMILY DOBRÉE.

THEY were usually taken for brother and sister, Mr. Croft's hair being no whiter than that of his daughter; his fresh complexion, too, seeming youthful compared with Elizabeth's pallor. At fifty-four she was quite an old woman; while at eighty-two he was well-preserved, free, excepting for a slight deafness, from most of the infirmities of age; possessed of keen interest in all that was going on in the world in general and his own parish in particular, and thoroughly enjoying a chat with a friend. They lived in little, depressing lodgings in a dreary London suburb, and he was proud of boasting that he had been at the same office for sixty years, and "on the road" traveling for a greater part of the time, as he canvassed for a large city firm. The outdoor life suited his taste, while his guileless heart, genial ways, and a certain Old World courtliness of manner, which well became him, won him many friends. He was never known to have made an enemy. Of later years he had canvassed only in London, going up to town with unfailing punctuality, and feeling wounded to his soul if a stalwart policeman or kindly youth ventured to offer him an arm at the most crowded crossings.

Poverty being, after all, a relative matter, it seemed obvious that their small income, which to many would mean absolute indigence, represented to them a fairly comfortable competence, supplying their simple needs and enabling them, with the aid of more or less self-denial, to help the parochial charities, and do many a little work of mercy.

Although they seldom spoke of it, the Crofts knew the day to be not far distant when the city work must perforce be given up,

and there would only be the little pension which the head of the firm had promised Mr. Croft should be his, in consideration of his long services.

Elizabeth eked out their small means by doing a great deal of embroidery for a London shop, which paid her at the rate of six cents an hour, or eight cents, if it was extra troublesome. As she sat over it, with Muff, the cat, lying at her feet, she often thought of that time when they would be so much poorer. She reflected on the various ways in which money would have to be saved, and with a sigh she knew that it would be necessary for her to work longer hours at her needle; this probably involving the relinquishing of some cherished duty in the sacristy. The latter was an employment dear to her heart, but it would have to be given up so as to gain time, she being determined that her beloved old father should not suffer by going without his accustomed little comforts.

They would have to put aside the yearly holiday to the seaside, where life in a cheap boarding house afforded them much amusement and interest, besides providing matter for conversation on their return. Mr. Croft enjoyed the crowded sands, the pier, the negroes playing the banjo and singing comic songs, as well as other amusements of the kind.

Miss Croft did not complain at the prospect; rather was she thankful that her father's abnormal activity and power of working had enabled him to keep his situation so long.

That autumn the last day at the office came, and Mr. Croft's pain at leaving the scene of his labors was much soothed by the kind things said by every one there as his hand was wrung with unfeigned good-will. They were all sorry to part with him, down to the little boy who swept out the office and ran commissions, and who was disgusted at himself for feeling a lump in his throat as he learned that the little old gentleman would come no more, and that the kind words and pennies were things of the past.

As Mr. Croft walked slowly through some narrow byways his manager's parting words rang sweetly in his ears: "We shall do ourselves the pleasure of asking you to dinner, Mr. Croft, a fare-

well mark of our esteem and respect. Will let you know and send you an invitation in due form. Just now Handler, Jameson, and one or two others are away, and we shall want to muster the lot. Yes, yes," he had continued, as Mr. Croft disclaimed the right to such an honor; "you deserve it, and we shall do it properly, you may depend upon it. Good-by, good-by," and Mr. Kennedy, who was a very forgetful but kind-hearted man, looked as sorry as he felt that the familiar figure would no longer be coming in and out. He congratulated himself that he had not minded his brother, who had wanted Mr. Croft pensioned off long ago to make way for a smart young fellow who was engaged to his daughter.

This was a great piece of unexpected news to tell Elizabeth, who was turning out a cupboard when he returned home. She had feared the trial it would be to her father to say good-by at the office, and she was surprised at the pleased expression of his face and the cheerful tones in which he requested Muff to get out of his own black chair by the little fire. He warmed his bloodless old hands as he told Elizabeth all about the invitation.

"When they give a dinner they do it in first-rate style," said Mr. Croft. "When Jewett left ten years ago they gave him one; but he was the assistant manager, and I never thought they would do anything of the kind for me. They had a dinner—you remember, Elizabeth?" he inquired, and his daughter nodded, for she had heard the description of that evening over and over again: "Nine courses; magnum bottles of champagne; waiters all over the place; and a little speechifying."

"How will you like that part, papa?" asked Elizabeth.

"I don't think I shall mind it a bit," said Mr. Croft. "I've time, you see, to think about what I shall say, for I don't fancy the invitation will come for three or four weeks; though I understand they send it generally a week or ten days before the day."

"It's fortunate you didn't give your dress coat away, papa, as you wanted to do," said Elizabeth, referring to an article of dress her father had possessed for thirty-six years and had seldom worn of late.

"It is," said Mr. Croft. "Well, I hadn't much spare cash that day," he continued, as if that were a rare, instead of a very usual occurrence. "And I was sorry for Burton. I thought he might have sold it, or even pawned it, and I never imagined I should require it. One never knows. It had better be aired, Elizabeth, for I seem to catch cold easily nowadays. The winters are colder than they used to be—or perhaps it's being eighty-two," he added sadly.

The thought of the dinner was a source of intense pleasure to both father and daughter. It would be something, indeed, to tell their friends, and though Elizabeth's imagination was of limited capacity, she already began to rehearse imaginary descriptions of it given by herself or her father. There was a feeling of innocent pride in the idea, and a satisfied content that their little circle and the parish they lived in should see how Mr. Croft was appreciated. The gentleman who lived next door wrote for the local paper; a soft flush came into Elizabeth's face as she thought that perhaps he might insert a paragraph in it, and as she was on bowing terms with Mr. Elton, and once having conversed with him in the road when his dog had attacked Muff, she felt it might be managed. She would buy several copies of the paper and send them to distant friends.

The necessity to work being gone, Mr. Croft lost much of his energy, and seemed glad to take his well-earned rest by his fireside, pay little visits to friends in the parish, and let the days go by gently. He read a good deal, for the rector sent him over his daily paper when he discovered that had been given up since the reduction in their income; he liked a novel with plenty of incident in it, and then there was always as a *pièce de résistance* conversationally the discussion of the invitation.

As the days went by and no invitation came, they practised a little pious deception with each other, by pretending that it was hardly time to expect it.

However, each knew that the other watched carefully for the postman's knock, and that there was a reciprocal sense of disappointment when no invitation came.

November passed. They both agreed confidently that it was only reasonable to suppose that the dinner would take place at Christmastide or the new year, as, being festive seasons, suitable for a function of the kind. They often discussed the probabilities of the case. Mr. Croft, whose memory was weakening, repeated over and over the promise of the dinner, to which he found himself looking forward with intensified pleasure.

Some friends asked them to Oxford for a week's visit when a mild January was half through, but Mr. Croft decidedly refused. Their expenses were to have been franked for them, and both would have much enjoyed the trip. Elizabeth had a little slack time; she was very tired, and she reminded her father that if the invitation came during their absence it would be forwarded by the landlady, who was grim, but conscientious.

"She might forget, or there might be some mistake," said Mr. Croft decidedly, and Elizabeth gave a half-sigh of resignation. March was very cold that year, and in May there was some exceptionally severe weather. As Elizabeth and her father sat in their dull little room the subject of the dinner gradually dropped out of their conversation, though not out of their thoughts and desires, while the sadness of hope deferred clung to their hearts. Such a little thing it would seem in the eyes of others—but it meant so much to them.

Put off and off until it was well nigh forgotten altogether, the subject of the dinner to Mr. Croft was brought suddenly to Mr. Kennedy's mind one June day when he came upon some accounts in the well-known shaky handwriting. His conscience reproached him, and settling the matter with his colleagues quickly, he thought he would make up for his dilatoriness by taking the invitation himself to Mr. Croft, hoping that the little attention would make up for his inexcusable negligence. The invitation was on a large printed card, requesting the pleasure of Mr. Croft's company to dinner on a given date, at a well-known and high-class city restaurant. With it safe in his coat pocket, Mr. Kennedy dined in town and then went down to the suburb where the Crofts lived, finding the ugly little street and shabby house with some difficulty.

Miss Croft herself opened the door, and Mr. Kennedy, in a jovial, genial tone, explained his errand as she closed the door after him, and he drew the invitation from his pocket.

"My father died a few hours ago," said she quietly, as they stood in the narrow, stuffy passage. "I had to open the door, for Mrs. Payn has gone for me to the undertaker. Yes; he got a bad chill a week ago," she continued in reply to Mr. Kennedy's shocked query, "and he never got over it."

When Mr. Kennedy left, Elizabeth took up the invitation the former had placed on the little hall table, and as she went slowly upstairs her heart had an additional weight of sadness.

"He would have been so pleased—it is a pity," said she to herself, thinking of her dead father who lay in his poor little room. She had put the old dress coat on him, and but for a feeling that it was hardly reverent, she would have liked to have slipped the invitation under the thin hands clasped over his well-worn rosary.

LITTLE NIGHTINGALE'S STRANGE STORY.

BY ELEANOR C. DONNELLY.

It all began four years ago, when I was bell-boy at Eccleston Cedars. My grandfather, Nightingale, had been butler there for years. That's why they called me *little* Nightingale; for I was thirteen when Mr. Eccleston hired me, and a good size for my age. The name stuck to me, even after grandfather died the next year.

There was lots of help in the house then, and my work was light enough. No one could be kinder to me than Miss Eccleston, master's orphan niece. After grandfather's death she used to send for me often, and teach me to read and write. If I am able now to tell this story to you straight and clear, I owe it all to her. Master, too, was good and pleasant that first year. He doted on his niece, and, as I was the grandson of her old nurse, he couldn't help seeing I was a bit of a pet with her. She was a very beautiful young lady, was Miss Rosabelle; and only a few years older than myself. She was fair and tall, with great, blue eyes, and masses of yellow hair. She wasn't a mite proud, for all her grand way of holding herself, like a young queen.

Her uncle thought nothing was too good for her. He dressed her in the finest silks and velvets, and just loaded her with diamonds. That first year she went out a good deal into company, and entertained her friends, and drove about the country in her pretty pony-phaeton. Our house was large and handsome. It stood on a hill about thirty feet from the highway—in the suburbs of an old Colonial city. We had lovely grounds, full of cedars and English walnut-trees. There were carriage-houses, and sta-

bles in the rear. Every Sunday, my master and Miss Eccleston drove twice a day to the little Catholic church a mile off. I rode with the footman behind their carriage, and often knelt with them both at the Communion-rail.

Regular as clock-work, Mr. Eccleston drove into the city every morning. He held some high position in the United States Mint. He had been there so long, and was so much looked up to that they called him the "Father of the Mint." Late in the spring of my second year at the Cedars, Miss Rosabelle was taken sick, and the family doctor ordered her away to drink the waters at Saratoga Springs. My master engaged the rooms for her himself—going up in advance to the Grand Union to see that she got the finest accommodations in the house. He was for sending her off at last with no one but her French maid, Lucette. But Miss Eccleston wouldn't hear of it.

"I must have my little Nightingale, uncle," she said, with her own sweet laugh. "Lucette is well enough, but I can't miss my boy's music."

(This was her little joke; for I couldn't turn a tune for my life.)

"Take your bird along, and be happy, sweetheart," said the master, good-naturedly, and pleased enough was I to pack my bag that very day and start for Saratoga with Miss Rosabelle and her maid.

After a long, delightful month at the Grand Union we went up to Newport for the rest of the season. Here the salt air and the baths and the long drives on the cliff brought back the roses to my young lady's cheeks, and made her eyes shine like stars. Master didn't come as often to her at Newport as he did at Saratoga. Didn't look like himself, either. Had a queer, absent way with him, and each time his large, square face seemed to grow yellower and more pinched. But he wouldn't hear of Miss Eccleston's going back home till September. Once, on a Sunday morning, when I was waiting orders in the hall, I heard her pleading with him to go to Mass with her at St. Mary's. And when he answered in a tender, troubled fashion: "Not to-day, Rosabelle

not to-day!" it came to me like a flash that he hadn't gone to church with her since we left the Cedars.

Her eyelids were red that evening when I carried in her tea; but she only smiled at me over her cup and asked if her uncle had gone away (as he had) on the late train to town. She might have said something more to me then if Lucette hadn't been in the way; but when I took her to Vespers later, I could hear her weeping softly as she bowed her beautiful head for the Benediction.

After a couple of weeks, master came and fetched us all home again.

On the road, I overheard him telling my mistress that he had made some alterations at the Cedars during her absence. He muttered something about "dangers in country places from burglars and tramps."

She looked startled and anxious. But I'm sure, all the same, that she never suspected the changes we found that day in the dear old spot. The first strange sight was in front of the grounds, where we saw two five foot fences of close barbed wire just above the sidewalk. One was where the pavement began, and the other right back of it. Next when the carriage rolled up the handsome drive it was stopped at the entrance to the grounds by a high iron gate, heavily padlocked. Another new thing was a smaller iron gate, close to the carriage gate, and giving on the path leading to the house. Master had to get out of the carriage, and unlock these gates with a key from his pocket.

He flushed a dark red, but he said nothing when Miss Eccleston cried out in dismay:

"O uncle, it looks like a prison!"

As soon as we were in the hall, he said slowly: "It's much safer this way, Rosabelle. We can't be too careful on these lonesome roads." Then seeing the wondering, frightened looks she cast upon the big new bolts and bars on the house-door, he went on:

"As I told you on the cars you must expect many changes here. They are necessary. Upstairs you will find that I have given you the whole second floor. I must have peace and quiet

for some important studies, so I have moved up to your old rooms on the third story. Little Nightingale's room on that floor was needed, so," (turning to me) "don't go upstairs, now; you'll find your cot and the rest of your things in yonder little closet, next to Miss Eccleston's reception-room."

It made my heart ache to see my young lady turn away with that troubled, terrified look on her sweet face. She never noticed master slinking away to the kitchens. Presently Lucette came tearing from that quarter in high dudgeon. She screamed out to her mistress that there were three fierce bull-dogs in the grounds—but not a creature in the house—no housekeeper, no cook, no footman, no anything. Mr. Eccleston had actually asked her—*her* (and she choked with indignant rage), Lucette Madeline Angelique Eulalie Marie Destuet, to prepare supper for the family!

It was too true. Master had discharged all the servants while we were at Newport. He had been living alone for months at Eccleston Cedars, doing all his own cooking and housework.

"*Bête!*" cried Lucette in a frenzy; "the man must be mad!"

I began to think the same the next morning, when master sent the French girl away, and told me I must do the cooking and waiting after this. He wanted no more thievish servants prying about and devouring him he said.

Strange and terrible was the life Miss Rosabelle and I lived together from that day. We were half-starved, half-frozen in the desolate house. Master went in and out as usual to the city; but he never crossed a church-door after our return. He spent all his time when at home in the third floor room that had once been mine. He was fast locked up in it, day and night. And *such* strange sounds as came from it! But for my dear young mistress I would have run away. I was terribly overworked; and many a time my heart stood still with fright when we heard those queer noises overhead. But I loved and pitied Miss Rosabelle too much to forsake her.

At last, one day early in December, I opened the hall-door

to a party of grand gentlemen. They were the Directors of the Mint, and they asked to see Miss Eccleston alone.

She had just come in from Mass—it was a holyday—and she went to them in the reception parlor, without laying off her things. From the door of my little room I watched her go up to the youngest of the group and give him her hand. He took it with a gentle respect which even then seemed to me half-pitying, half-anxious. He had known and admired her for years. How lovely she looked in her furs and rich silks, the plumed hat shading her fair young face!

I closed the door upon them and stole away to fetch master (who hadn't gone to town that day) his cup of hot coffee. When I ran up with his tray, bless my heart! if I didn't meet them—the Directors and Miss Rosabelle, and some strange men who had joined them, on the third floor, outside that dreadful closed room. It is all like a horrible dream to me now—the forcing of the locked door, and the finding of master, white and scared, in an old rusty suit, bending over a blazing furnace, in the middle of a lot of queer apparatuses and bottles. He seemed to be melting something yellow and glittering in an iron pan. At first I thought he was making an omelet. But one of the Directors cried out: "Why, Eccleston, you've got a regular chemist's shop here!" And another—one of Pinkerton's men—whispered behind his hand: "Blast furnaces, and crucibles, and Bunsen burners, no less! Look you, gentlemen, this is where he melts the gold he has stolen from the vaults!"

Then Miss Rosabelle with a sharp cry dropping down among us all like one dead, I knew that she, too, had overheard that awful whisper.

* * * * *

They found the secret closets, with their sliding panels, along the walls. They rooted out the iron boxes and safes, heaping with coin, or filled to the top with bars and lumps of gold and silver—the wretched treasures for which my master had sold his God and brought ruin on his soul.

He confessed all.

For months he had been stealing the gold from the Mint; but, till then, the officers had refused to believe it. They took him away from his home that day forever; and I never saw him again.

But I often go to the convent where my sweet Miss Rosabelle boards; and when she tells me of the wonders of God's mercy, and of His patient love for sinners, I know, by the look on her fair, quiet face, that her uncle has repented in his prison-cell—that he has found there (thanks be to the Lord!) the peace and pardon he rejected, years ago, at Eccleston Cedars.

THE HEART OF HEARTS.

BY MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN.

Mr. Washburne Bolton was almost alone in the world. His wife had passed away five years before the Christmas of 1901, and his daughter, Laura, had married an English country gentleman, and she lived in Norfolk. His wife's tomb, near Boston, was crowned with a famous bronze figure of Annihilation, done by an artist who had succeeded in making the face of this wonderful piece of sculpture express only despair. Mrs. Bolton had been an Agnostic; Mr. Bolton, after her death, thought of becoming a Unitarian; and he had been drawn toward this by the words of John Milton:

"To be still teaching what we do not know by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it, this is the golden rule in theology as in arithmetic, and makes the best harmony in the church, not the formal and outward union of cold, neutral, and inwardly divided minds."

On consideration, however, John Milton's words, though used by Unitarians as one of their mottoes, did not seem to lead him directly into the fashionable Boston denomination. Annihilation, Nirvana, he could not accept; and as, at the age of fifty, he had retired from business, he had nothing to think of in this world except his possible fate in the next. Boston became distasteful to him after his wife's death; England, he disliked; so he went into a bachelor's apartment in New York; and there he became lonelier than ever. He read John Milton's prose, in a splendid edition, and Marcus Aurelius and Emerson; but he became lonelier than ever. Even his favorite Unitarian preachers insisted that religion was of the heart, and declared

that their church needed more faith; but neither faith nor heart did he find in the philosophical Roman or the speculative American.

One evening, before dinner, he dropped into the Cathedral, and stood near the door. People entering and leaving noticed the tall, military figure, with the closely-trimmed white mustache, who stood so erect—as if determined not to kneel—in the clear light of the autumn afternoon. Something *drew* him, and, by degrees, he entered the cool and silent church. He advanced further and further through the nave; and there he stood, his eyes fixed on that small point of fire in the lamp, to which all things in the Cathedral seemed to converge. He knew what it meant.

"If I could accept Christ with my heart, I could kneel before the Host," he said, as he stood there; for Washburne Bolton was deeply read in philosophy, and he had none of the ignorance of the vulgar, to whom even the mysteries of the life around them have no sacred meaning.

He turned away, after a long period of silence. Then he went back, half ashamed; and certain that nobody saw him, he made an awkward genuflection.

"To the unknown God!" he said, apologetically to himself. "Marcus Aurelius, if he lived to-day, might do this same thing."

He did not notice a little girl, in a frock too thin for the season, wearing a straw hat with a wreath of faded spring flowers, who had knelt near him. The frock was faded, too, and its sleeves had crept up just below two thin little elbows, which were reddened by the crisp November wind. The child made a forlorn little figure, her eager blue eyes almost redeeming her boniness, and the scores of freckles under the cloud of red hair that struggled below her hat. She followed Mr. Bolton as he started across Fifth Avenue; but he was forced to stop suddenly. A great furniture van had struck a neat little brougham which had been going up Fifth Avenue at a rattling pace. The child darted in front of Mr. Bolton; he saw her for a moment, like a flash, just before the horses attached to the carriage reared with a broken pole between them, and the brougham, with a sound of breaking

glass, went over on its side. Bolton stepped forward and lifted the occupant of the vehicle safely into the street. It was not hard; she was a little, light, old woman, wrapped in furs and laces, and carrying a great bunch of violets. It was evident that she was not hurt; she clung to Bolton's arm a moment. The coachman, a policeman, the driver of the van, and a spectator, were righting the carriage. Bolton led the old lady to the pavement; the little girl followed as if dazed; her face was very white.

"There, child," said the old woman, nervously. "You may have these flowers. I'm afraid they're crushed, and just now their odor makes me ill. I thank you, sir," she added, turning to Bolton. "I can not thank you enough for your promptitude and kindness. And now will you add to them by taking me in to the church?"

Bolton offered his arm.

"My name is Mrs. Rossiter," she added.

He knew the name. The Rossiters had stood high in the land since the second Rossiter, the son of the one who had come over with Lord Baltimore, had signed the Declaration of Independence. She spoke with the exquisite modulations of a woman of the highest culture.

The two entered the Cathedral; she did not explain herself, but knelt in a rapture of ecstasy, her face wet with tears of thanksgiving, as she raised it toward the tabernacle. He stood for a little while, and then he knelt, with his face turned wonderingly toward this awful yet consoling spot of light.

After a time she rose, and genuflected, and he, being a gentleman, imitated her.

"I need not explain to you," she said, gently, "the reason why I have detained you—for I see that you, also, are a Catholic. Oh, who can express the consolation of the Blessed Sacrament! I must trouble you," she added, after a pause, "to call a cab for me."

She drove off, thanking him again and again.

He watched the cab disappear, and turned to go on his way, when a sob arrested him. The twilight was coming, but he recog-

nized the little girl in the thin frock and the faded straw hat; she was crying.

"I have lost *it*," she said. "If you have a match, sir, will you help me to look for it?—it was a five-dollar note the lady gave me with the flowers."

Bolton looked at her sharply. Was this a trick?

"I would not speak to you," she added, shrinking somewhat, "but I saw you praying in the Cathedral. I never begged before, but I was going to ask you for something—for my mother is sick—oh, so sick—and since I sprained my wrist I can not sew—and then the lady gave me the violets and the money."

He looked into her face. What strange harmony bound these Catholics—she had "seen him in church," when he thought nobody could see him, and, therefore, she was not afraid! She had an honest face—a pure face; she looked to be scarcely thirteen, and her face showed she had suffered.

He lit a match, and stooped—he, the stateliest and most conservative of men, who chose never, in any cause, to stoop! The light flashed on the note near a few withered leaves.

"Oh, thanks, thanks!" the girl exclaimed, running as fast as she could to the Cathedral. Bolton followed. What a twilight this was—this, the third time, he was to enter the temple, where the rich and the poor, the humble and the great, the exquisite Mrs. Rossiter and this wretched little waif knelt, in the "best harmony," saying the same words, believing in the intimate union between God and man through the Host. To, day after day, search and find new beauties and truths in life that bring the heart nearer to Christ, so that danger and even poverty have golden meanings, known only to the loving heart—this may not have been, he thought, what John Milton meant, but, to-night, in the Cathedral, this is what John Milton's words meant to *him*. He knelt humbly at the back of the church; he saw the poor little girl come slowly down without the violets, her face bearing the rapture upon it he had seen on Mrs. Rossiter's.

"Wait!" he whispered, as she passed him.

He bent himself almost to the floor before the Mystery.

"I believe," he said, "I believe, with all my heart. I have found the God of love," he added, "the love I have sought!"

The little girl waited for a long time; he forgot her; but, when he came, he raised his hands involuntarily as if in blessing.

"Go home, child," he said, when she had told him her name and address, "and tell your mother to trouble no more—she has found a grateful friend, who will remember that you have helped to lead him Home."

"NOT MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES."

BY THEO. GIFT.

"You mean that you have changed—that you don't care for me any more!"

"I do care for you. I always shall as—as a friend; but—"

"Not in the only way I want—the way I care for you? And yet—O Joyce! it's not so long ago since you seemed to do so. Have you forgotten that evening, last summer—?"

"Oh, don't talk about last summer!" the girl flashed out, impatiently; but her pretty face crimsoned at the reminder. "Summer is past and gone, and lots of things have happened since. There was no dreadful war to think of then; nor all our brave men going away to fight, and perhaps be killed, in it. If you were one of them"—her eyes flamed suddenly—"I can't think why you are not, or how you can bear to sit still like—like any of the steers on the farm here, while other lads—"

"Are sticking cockades in their hats, and volunteering for the show," the man put in, not without a touch of bitterness. "Well, for those who can and will, it's a fine thing, and I don't grudge it them. Others there are who can't."

"And wouldn't if they could!" The girl hurried out the words almost as if she wanted to wound, her cheeks still poppy-red, and her blue eyes wet with angry moisture. It was the moisture that made them angry, for why should she care? What was it to her what he did, or whether he went or stayed, stupid, stick-at-home Miles Stretton, who was only a "friend" after all, and who preferred to be a commonplace, unheroic builder's foreman in his native town to winning honor and glory in the Transvaal? Well—

"Wouldn't do wrongfully what they couldn't do rightfully. That's about the size of the thing, if you look at it right side up," Miles said, quietly. "And for me to volunteer, with a widowed mother all but blind and wholly dependent on me, would be about the wrongest thing going. You know very well I promised father on his death-bed that I'd never leave her while she lived; and now that Jim's regiment has been ordered to the front, and that wretched wife of his is in an inebriate asylum, I've got to keep an eye on his children into the bargain, see that they get proper schooling, and make a bit of home life for them in the holidays. It's lucky for us all that I've got such a good berth, though I've worked hard enough for it. There's not much '*sitting still*' in Horton & Green's firm; nor they aren't the sort to keep a place open for the best workman living, if he threw it up to suit his own pleasure and to their inconvenience; but, when they have got a man that suits them, they recognize it, and though I know I'm not near good enough for you, Joy, in any way—I never saw the man who was!—still, I thought if you *could* care for me a little, and if you knew that I had already the half-promise of a partnership when old Horton retires—that won't be long, either. He's made a lot of money out of the business, and—"

"As if I cared about that sort of thing!" Joy flashed out. "Partnership, and making money, and—O Miles! is that all you think of or care for, when your Queen and your country are calling for you, and when other men are giving up everything—everything? Oh, yes; I dare say you owe a duty to your mother. And if you even felt sorry it *was* your duty—if you *wanted* to go, it would be different; but you don't! You know you don't. You—" she fixed him, wide-eyed, with a blue flame of indignation—"why, I believe that in your heart you're glad not to have to fight against those Boers! Perhaps you sympathize with them! Perhaps—"

"I'm a pro-Boer, as well as a coward! Say it out, if you think it, Joy; but you've said too much as it is!" the man retorted. She had made him angry at last, and she saw it, with a little nervous tremor at her heart quite new to her where Miles

was concerned. "Well, you're right in one thing, however. I *am* glad that my poor mother, who gave her first-born son to fight for the Queen ten years ago or more, has got the other left to care for her, now she's old and feeble. Aye, as glad as I am that the Queen herself—God bless her!—has got more than one son to do the same by her. It'd be bad for her, widowed and aged as she is, if 'twere otherwise."

"But those who go have mothers whom they care for just the same," Joyce persisted. "Lucas Ferrier is leaving his—"

"Luke Ferrier!" Miles' anger broke in a laugh of contempt. "A good job for her, if he is! The scamp has done all he could to break her heart while—"

"Miles, that's a coward speech. How dare you! Just because he's been a bit wild, and has too much spirit to put up with his employers' mean little tyrannies! Oh, I dare say he's foolish. He's not such a good *business* man as you, but you don't know him—"

"I? Why, I've known him ever since we were at the dame's school together, and I had to thrash him for bullying little kids half his own size, and—"

"Oh, it's mean—mean of you to bring up things like that now!" she cried, striking her soft, suntanned little fist against the bar of the gate which separated them, she in the corn-field within, he in the lane, elder hung and hedged with hazel showing ripening nuts among the yellowed leaves without. "As if all boys didn't act badly sometimes! And who but you would remember it, when he's just given up everything to go and fight against his country's enemies? Why, his regiment is under orders to sail in another fortnight, and I—I—"

"*You!* What in heaven's name have you to do with Luke Ferrier, Joy? *Luke,* that—"

"Miles, be silent! You don't know. I—I am going to be his wife. He asked me only two days ago; and I promised I would when the war is over."

* * * * *

Two years had passed, troubled, sorrowful years for England,

which had brought many changes, and left many a ruin in their path. Victoria the Good, the mother-queen, was dead: laid in her grave, amid the tears of a great empire, her royal heart broken by the strain and anguish of a strife which had cost her so many of her children.

Miles Stretton's mother was dead too. Enteric fever had claimed "Corporal Jim" for a victim some twelve months earlier, and in spite of all the care and devotion of her younger son, and the affection of her grandchildren whom he had brought to live with them, the blind woman had drooped and faded, following her first-born to the grave within a day or two of the first anniversary of her loss. The great funeral procession which found its end at Frogmore, and the little group of mourners round the quiet village grave where Christmas roses starred the frozen soil, celebrated their obsequies in the same week.

Then—in the early days of February—Miles Stretton volunteered for the front.

Many things indeed had changed and come to an end; but the war was not one of them, and never had England's fortune and England's honor seemed in such perilous case as in that black and mournful February, when to Joyce, grown paler and thinner in these two years, came a double bit of news. Horton & Green, the wealthy builders, had offered Miles a partnership in the firm, and Miles had declined it, and had got himself enrolled in the Imperial Yeomanry corps which Lord Birdmorten was then raising from the county.

Oddly enough, the latter news gave the girl a sense of dismay rather than pleasure. There had been no word of love, no reminder of it, from his lips since the day when she had confessed to her engagement with Lucas Ferrier; but the knowledge (intuitive in women) that it was still *there,* that nothing had ever changed or lessened it, and that no other woman had ever seen the light of love in his eyes or heard its accent on his tongue, could hardly fail to invest with a certain grateful sweetness the steady, kindly friendship which he always showed her.

And Joyce needed a friend. True, she had been spared what

so many women had had to endure. Lucas was alive; was not, indeed, among those who had suffered from either wounds or fever; but neither had he distinguished himself in any way, been promoted, or mentioned in despatches. At first, indeed, during a long period when the regiment was detained at the Cape, she had not heard from him at all; and only *of* him by a letter from a fellow-trooper to his wife, in which Ferrier was spoken of as "a rough devil, always messing about with the worst lot of Cape Town girls, or having to do pack-drill for drink and insubordination."

Joy was a very proud girl, and she wrote a letter then, a bitter, passionate one; but, because women have a knack of looking forward, and you never know in war-time at what moment of stress and redemption hard words might reach their destination, the letter was torn up again. Only after that people began to notice that she looked older, and that, when you spoke to her of her lover, the joyous pride with which she used to answer you had faded from her eyes.

And now she was to lose her old and loyal friend as well. Joy's heart sank before the prospect. She could hardly hold back the protest from her lips, when he said to her, quite simply, "I think you'll be glad to hear—"

But after all, Miles never went!

* * * * *

A little group of grave-faced, khaki-clad men drawn up on the railway platform, in the wan light of a wintry afternoon. A drunken woman staggering out of the crowd of onlookers, "Corporal Jim's" dissolute wife, long since separated by the law from contact with her children, and muddily vindictive against her brother-in-law for having supplanted her in their guardianship. A torrent of curses, and a rush to strike him, overshooting its mark, and flinging the assailant on the line just as the train was coming in. A leap. A strong arm thrusting her into safety; and then a roar, a rattle, a chorus of shrieks; and *something* crushed, mutilated, terrible, lying in the six-foot way. . . .

They let Joyce see him just before he died. He was past pain.

almost past speech then; but when she sobbed out, "Oh, *why,* why did you—for that wretch! She wasn't worth it," his fast-dimming eyes checked her.

"Don't be—hard on her," he whispered. "She's not all bad. Perhaps *this*—and Jim cared for her once. Anyhow," a faint smile trembled on the pale lips, "no man who has had a mother to love him, and—and a girl like you to love, can help but feel gently to—every other woman for your sakes."

As Joy was leaving the hospital, a letter, which she had pulled out of her pocket with her handkerchief, fell to the ground. It was one she had received from Luke some weeks before; and, as she picked it up, her glance fell on a paragraph in it:

"*Burning farms is rather an exciting pastime. The women and children all start howling at once; but there's no time to lose. All hands begin carting out the things, and the fire's soon going grandly. If you're not careful, however, those women aren't above seizing a rifle and having a shot at you in the general scramble. Just let* ME *catch one of the—*"*

Joyce walked slowly on. Her eyes had an almost wild look, as if they were vainly asking some question of the past and future.

But perhaps in her heart she knew the answer already.

And it had come too late!

* This paragraph is quoted from the actual letter of a trooper written during the war.

DOWN THE INCLINE.

BY LEIGH GORDON GILTNER.

THE folders issued annually by the J. H. & C. Railway were wont to dilate upon the picturesqueness of the scenery visible from its observation cars, with an enthusiasm not wholly shared by the employees of the road, who, for the most part, looked with disfavor upon the steep grades and winding ascents along its route through the mountain regions. Conley in particular was eloquent in his strictures. He had given up a run on a level southern road to take charge of No. 86, the sturdy hill-climber that on alternate days pulled a long string of freight cars up or down the steep inclines to which Conley never quite grew reconciled.

"Blame this cursed crawlin' up hill and down!" he would say to his phlegmatic fireman. "Give me a good level stretch of road with my hand on the throttle and the track clear ahead—and I'll show you! I mind a run I made once on the L. & J. with the superintendent and the roadmaster in the cab. The track was clear ahead, and you'd better believe, Mike, I made old '17' get out and fly! We ran it in twenty-seven minutes less than schedule time, and could have done a bit better if the old man had said the word. I tell you, Cregan, that was something like!"

"Well," Cregan would suggest, "mabbe some day on wan o' thim down grades th' brakes'll lave go, an' ye'll git a chance to hit a pace that'll suit ye!"

"I'd kinder like to let her rip once just to see what she could do—but it'd be as much as my job's worth. The old man 'ud throw a fit if ever I give her a chance to show her gait."

"Thrue for ye, Dan," the fireman would agree, "an' so he would, I'm thinkin."

The village of Glenmary, in which Conley made his home, lay in a valley along the line of the J. H. & C. The tracks of the railway ran along the side of a mountain, descending a little as they neared the town. But even at the station the roadbed lay considerably above the main street, which approached the depot at a steady incline. Well along this street, which ran straight through the village, terminating ignominiously in a cow pasture, was the trim white cottage which was Conley's Elysium. Whenever, by day, the freight pulled through Glenmary, Kitty Conley's neat figure, with another smaller figure beside it, was sure to be seen at the gate or upon the porch of the white cottage—or more often at the station, where a chance word might be had with Conley while the engine watered. All the men on the route knew Kitty and little Ellen, and many a parcel of sweetmeats found its way from one or another of the trainmen to the fair-haired child clinging timidly to the skirts of her pretty black-eyed mother.

Conley's engine had for years been his one idol, but from the day he first met Kitty Dundon at the fireman's annual picnic, No. 86 had taken second place in his affections.

"The old girl's had to take a back seat," the men would say. "She's not in it with Kitty and the kid!"

"And shmall blame till him for thot same," Cregan never failed to add.

Just at dawn one morning in late May, No. 86 was creeping cautiously down the mountain side with an immense train at her back. It was composed of a string of coal floats and eighteen tank cars.

"She's got her work cut out for her to-day!" Conley said, as they steamed slowly out of Lee Summit and started down the long incline.

"Yis," Cregan assented, "she's got a sthiff load at her back the day, an' I'm hopin' nothin'll let go."

He put his head out of the cab window. Before him stretched

the shining rails of the track, tending steadily downward; on the one hand, a steep rise; on the other, a slight declivity sloping toward the valley in which lay Glenmary. The gray dawn mist was pierced with long shafts of light, the faint saffron tints along the eastern sky were warming into a glory of rose and gold; the birds had begun their morning songs and the mountain flowers along the way were opening their dewy eyes. The air was sweet with fresh morning scents and the fragrance of May blossoms—but it was of none of these things that Cregan was thinking.

"I hope Dinny'll be on hand with me grub pail whin we git to Glinmary," he said, drawing in his head.

Slowly, cautiously, carefully, every brake set, every man of the crew watchful and alert, they crept down the mountain side. They had just passed Belleair, midway between Lee Summit and Glenmary when the air-gage told the engineer there was something wrong with the brakes, while to his quick perceptions it seemed that there was considerable lightening of the load gallant old 86 was holding back with all her splendid power. He knew instinctively what had happened even before Cregan, from his perch at the window, shouted with his nearest approach to excitement:

"She's parted in the middle, Dan, and the back siction's comin' down on us like blazes! We'll have to git a move on!"

Conley's face had gone white under its grime.

"That's right, Mike," he answered, quietly, "we'll have to give old 86 her head. There's oil in them hind cars and we don't want them to smash into us! We'll have to get out o' their way."

No. 86 with her long train of coal cars in her wake bounded forward like an arrow from the bow. The track was clear till they should reach Kingston, and Conley knew what he had to do. He opened the throttle wide, and with something like a prayer in his heart waited for what should come. His one great hope was that when they rounded the curve in the roadway four miles south of Belleair the detached section would leave the track and plunge down the steep embankment, and it was this hope which kept his hand steady and his nerve firm during those first awful moments

of suspense. Neither man spoke a word—each knew what was in the other's thoughts. It seemed to Conley as if the fireman must hear the beating of his heart above the pumping of the engine, and the roar and rattle of the cars. When they swung round the curve, each man caught his breath sharply, then swiftly, fearfully, looked back. The rear section had rounded the curve safely, and to their strained senses seemed to be gaining steadily upon them. From that point the road ran straight down to Glenmary, and both men realized that their one chance lay in racing away from the detached section. Cregan fired with the energy of desperation, and Conley now and again spoke to his engine as if she were human. His face was white and set, but his voice was quite steady when he said at last:

"Mike, I'm afraid we won't make it. That back section's crowdin' us mighty close, and she's apt to smash into us any minute. I've got to stay, but you'd better look out for a good place to jump."

"Betther let me take her, Dan. I know how to run her through. Ye've got a wife an' child, an' there's no wan depindin' on me."

Conley shook his head.

"The old man give me charge of this engine, Cregan, and I've got no right to shove her off on you. Be ready to jump when we strike the level—and Mike, if anything should happen to me, look after Kitty and the kid."

The pace was awful. Objects along the way, trees, rocks and shrubs flew by in a confused blur; the engine rocked from side to side and the rumble and roar was deafening—but they did not seem to gain perceptibly. As they neared Glenmary one shrill warning blast after another tore itself from the engine's throat. They were scheduled to stop, but Conley knew he had a clear track ahead to Kingston and he dared not slacken speed. Cregan reluctantly made ready to jump, feeling himself a cowardly deserter, though he knew he could do little good by remaining, and the risk he was taking was scarcely less great than that he would have incurred in staying. Even at the last he faltered, hesitated,

and looked distressfully at Conley, who shouted above the awful clamor—

"Go ahead, Mike—you can't do nothin' and there's no use for us both to stay. Take care of Kitty for me."

An instant and Cregan's figure, poised for the leap, had disappeared. Before Conley could assure himself of the fireman's safety, there came a fearful crash, followed by an explosion that tore the morning stillness with a mighty roar like the voice of a cyclone. Conley knew at once that the rear section had at last smashed into him; but after the first shock he became aware that his cars were still following—not one of them having been jolted from the track. The forward car, one of the oil tanks of the runaway section, had been hurled sidewise across the tracks, and the cars behind, one after another, were piled upon it. The first crash caused the oil in one of the tank cars to explode and ignite, and the terrific heat exploded the other cars one after another.

The first blast from the engine's whistle had drawn the station-master to the platform. He took in the situation at a glance, and realizing the awful catastrophe impending, dashed back into the little telegraph office and began to call Kingston desperately. Before Kingston had time to reply there came the warning crash, followed almost instantly by the roar of the explosion.

When Cregan sprang from the flying engine, he had lurched forward, falling heavily upon his face. Though half stunned by the fall the consciousness of impending peril helped him to drag himself up and look about him. What he saw lent wings to his feet, and, bruised, jarred, and shaken as he was, in an instant he was flying down the street, shouting in stentorian tones the dread word which has always power to rouse men from their heaviest slumber. When, dazed by the heavy fall, he had struggled up dizzily, the detached section of the freight was not five feet from the last of the coal floats, and almost before he could collect his scattered wits there came the crash of the collision, followed almost instantly by the roar of the explosion. The vast quantity of oil in the tank cars was ablaze in a second, and the incline running from the depot down to the main street acted as a sluice

for the burning fluid, which poured into the chief thoroughfare, setting fire to everything it touched. Without pausing to witness the effects of the collision, Cregan, followed by the station-master, rushed down the street, shouting, calling, pounding on doors and windows as they ran, till, almost at Conley's gate, they came face to face with Kitty. Her quick ear had heard the first blast from her husband's engine, and recognizing the note of distress, she had dressed hastily. Leaving little Ellen asleep in the house, she was rushing in frantic haste to the depot. At her cry of terror Cregan turned and looked back along the way he had come. Down the narrow village street swept a living river of flame—a rushing torrent of blazing oil, sweeping steadily down upon them, trees, shrubs, fences, houses, grass, and barns reduced to ashes by the blighting touch of the fiery flood. Everything parched and shriveled at its approach as at the breath of the deadly sirocco.

"Dan?" Kitty's white lips faltered. "Where is he, Mike?"

"He's all right!" Cregan answered, with an assurance he was far from feeling; then together they turned and dashed into the house. They dragged little Ellen from her crib, wrapped a quilt about her, and, just as the house next above burst into flames, fled out the rear door and across the tiny lot which held Conley's entire collection of live stock—three hens, a Jersey heifer, and a pig. Cregan paused long enough to free the cow and drive the pig into the open before he joined Kitty and the hurrying throng, fleeing in a mad panic before the horror sweeping down upon them. Within five minutes after the first explosion the flowing river of oil had reached the town hall in the heart of the village, and ten minutes later the structure was enveloped in flames. Then building after building—all of them frame—took fire as the oil touched them, and within half an hour an area five hundred feet square was a mass of flames.

Meantime, Dan Conley was fighting the battle of his life. After the first shock of the collision, when he realized that his section was intact, he felt a sensation that was almost one of relief, and he promptly slackened speed with the intention of

seeing whether Cregan was safe, and ascertaining the amount of damage caused by the wreck. But before he had succeeded in bringing the engine to a standstill there came the deafening report of the first explosion, followed by another and another. An instant more and a flood of living flame was pouring down upon the village. Conley's heart stood still. His home lay directly in the course of the flaming torrent, and that home held all that was dear to him on earth. For one brief instant he wavered, then suddenly he saw creeping down upon him a long line of flame like a fiery serpent, where the burning oil was flowing along the incline, destroying the ties and bending and twisting the rails of the track in its course. Conley's section was made up wholly of coal floats, and he knew what must inevitably ensue if he abandoned his charge. Moreover, the passenger was due at Kingston in twenty minutes and the telegraph station was in flames. With a tightening of the throat Conley realized that there was nothing left him but to pull his train into the siding at Kingston and stop the passenger, leaving his wife and child to their fate. He did not know whether Cregan was dead or alive —he could only pray desperately that he might have been spared to save them. He knew his duty, and was prepared to do it at whatever cost to himself. Again he put on all steam, and again he called on valiant 86 for the best that was in her.

Above the rumble of the flying train as it shot forward he could hear the shouts of the villagers, the roar and crackle of the devouring flames, and the awful, half-human cries of helpless dumb creatures left to perish in the surging sea of fire. Conley's soul was sick within him. He was not a praying man, but few more fervent petitions ever went up than those framed by the engineer's white lips in those awful moments of agonized suspense which seemed a lifetime to him. He was running at a fearful rate of speed, but he seemed to crawl down the incline. His face showed gray and ghastly where streams of perspiration had washed away the grime, and the veins in his throat and forehead stood out like cords of steel; but he drove his engine safe into the siding at Kingston, put her in charge of another

man, and reported the situation to the operator and the road-master before he turned his face toward his ruined home.

Then and not till then did he get a horse and dash madly cross country up the slope, taking ditches and fences when he could, making detours when fairly forced to do so, but always pressing furiously, desperately, toward the burning village. A rescue party was being rapidly made up, but Conley could not wait. Once his horse stumbled and fell heavily, and for an instant his rider lay half-stunned on the hard earth; but in a moment he was up and mounted, urging the tired beast to renewed effort. Always he strained his gaze toward where Glenmary had stood. Yet when he came in sight of the spot he scarcely dared turn his eyes that way. The scene was indeed appalling in its desolation. Where, a few hours before, had stood comfortable dwellings, roomy barns, and spacious storehouses, stretched a charred and blackened acreage of smoldering ruins, while here and there the flames still leaped from a building not wholly consumed.

With a sickening feeling of dread at his heart, Conley urged his jaded horse forward to where a group of men, women, and children stood among the few pathetic remnants of household goods which they had been able to snatch from the flames.

As the grimy figure on the weary horse came into view a shout went up from the little band, and almost before Conley could fling himself to the ground, Kitty and little Ellen were clinging to him and Cregan grasping his hand. They are not given to heroics—these men of the road, accustomed daily and hourly to face danger and death—and Conley only said, as he gripped Cregan's horny fist:

"Well, Mike, and so you saved them for me?"

And Cregan answered lightly, though with a suspicion of moisture in his eyes:

"Hiven be praised! Ivery wan iv thim!—Kitty, Ellen, Bossy, an' the pig!"

A MIDNIGHT CALL.

BY JEROME HARTE.

Miss Mary was putting on her hat before the little blurred mirror in the kitchen. The sun shifted in through the drawn green shades of the south windows, making speckled patches on the bright rag carpet, and the cat basked in a little square of sunlight before the screen door. Out on the sunken steps of the back porch, beneath a home-made awning of faded blue, sat a hulking figure in checkered jeans, his shoulders hunched over, his elbows upon his knees, meditatively chewing and gazing into space.

"Glory be to God, Hank!" cried Miss Mary, peering out at him. "Isn't it an awful thing? Every day alike to you, and never your foot inside a church on Sunday!"

The man on the steps grunted.

"It's the sorry woman your poor old mother'd be if she had lived to see this day!" went on Miss Mary, a bright red spot showing on either faded cheek. "You that never goes to Mass and hasn't kneeled your knee to a priest in twenty years—her only son! I wouldn't mind if you had a good safe job"—Miss Mary caught her breath sharply. "Glory be to God!" she cried again, raising her voice in anger to hide its quiver. "You won't go to Mass, and you don't know the hour God'll call you away without warning!"

"Tend to your own soul, Mary Ann, and don't mind me!" said the man, sulkily. "It's none too good you are yourself!"

He got up, sideways, and shambled down the steps and into the backyard, out of hearing, where he stood smoking, his shoulders

still hunched up, one hand grasping and holding up the elbow of the hand that steadied the pipe in his mouth.

Miss Mary sighed and muttered in useless anger. She put on her worn silk mits and took up her parasol. The cat stretched in the sun and followed her lazily to the front door.

"Good-by, Peter," said Miss Mary to the cat and shut the screen door. Peter stretched himself in the sun and yawned and went back to his sunny spot.

Miss Mary picked her way with old-fashioned daintiness down the blackened board walk and up the tree-lined street. The little dressmaker, crossing the road at right angles, met her at the corner.

"Good morning," she said, timidly, "going to Mass?"

A gleam of sharp humor came into Miss Mary's eyes and her thin lips twitched; where else would she be going at this time of a Sunday morning? Then she frowned coldly, and her old face hardened. Miss Mary had a feeling of enmity toward the little dressmaker, and even her sense of humor would not let her unbend for an instant.

"Good morning," she said. "Yes; I'm going to Mass."

The little dressmaker fell into step beside her. "I'm going, too," she said. "It's a real pleasant day, isn't it?"

Very much the same scene had been enacted on this very corner every Sunday morning, rain, hail, or shine, for fifteen years now—ever since the little dressmaker had first come to Sayre and hung up her shingle on a cottage not far from the house into which Hank and Miss Mary had moved, but a year or two before her coming. From her front window she could see Miss Mary leave her gate, and there, as Miss Mary suspected, the little dressmaker stood, Sunday after Sunday, gloved and bonneted, waiting for Miss Mary's appearance, when she had just time to meet her at the corner. Miss Mary had been frankly surprised that first Sunday morning; she had never dreamed that Kittie Klein would come to Sayre. She held her tongue, too, when the little dressmaker told Miss Mary and her neighbors, simply and in a few words, that she had come to Sayre to settle down. Beyond these

brief Sunday morning walks, Miss Mary purposely saw nothing of the dressmaker. Some one found out that they had both come from the same home town. The village gossips tried to find out more about it, but somehow the most curious did not get at the truth.

And the truth was very pretty. When Hank was young and full of life and God-love, before his mother's death, he and the little dressmaker had been sweethearts. She was not the little dressmaker then, but care-free Kittie Klein, the daughter of a neighboring farmer, and as beautiful a girl as the country held. It was in the days before Hank had taken to a railroader's precarious existence. He was the only son of his mother, and she a widow, and he was a good son, for whom the farm life and Christian obedience and love for Kittie Klein made up the sum of a very happy life. The years passed in sunshine, and the light storms of youth; the crops prospered and brought rich returns, and Kittie Klein began to make her wedding-clothes. Antoinette, Miss Mary's oldest sister, had married and gone to live in the city. They were glad that she was happy—and it made more room for the coming of Hank's wife. They got a new team and new farming implements, and Miss Mary and her mother bought new parlor furniture. Those were sunny days, and Hank's spirits ran high.

And then, troubles came, as sometimes happens—not singly, but in battalions. Ever afterward Miss Mary turned from the memory of those days with bitter tears. Little Cassie, the youngest and best beloved of their home ones, sickened and died that spring. The doctors could do nothing to keep her on earth, and there were those who said that she was too good to live. Her loss was a blow to them all, and the widowed mother drooped. She was ill, too, during the summer, and the doctor's bills multiplied. That season a long period of drought was followed by incessant rains, and the crops were well-nigh ruined. Some of the cattle were visited with distemper, and died. Little wrinkles of trouble crept into Hank's face and, never a patient fellow, he railed at their increasing ill-fortunes. The farm had to be mortgaged. The widow bowed her head to God's will and went out into

the kitchen and the dairy and the farmyard with Miss Mary—a thing she had not done in years. Hank, grown suddenly sober and preoccupied, repeated his nightly rosary with less and less fervor. Hank had to disturb him a matter more potent—to him—than the farm. He and Miss Kittie were to have been married that spring, but he had had to put it off. Miss Kittie, vivacious and self-willed as she was, was vexed. She pouted and sulked and flirted with former lovers. Hank's heart was sore.

Until this time Hank had never touched liquor, and he had always been a good, practical Catholic. No one can blame Miss Mary because she laid his fall from grace at Kittie Klein's feet.

It was one Saturday night that he had taken Kittie to a sleigh-ride. It was late when he got home—so late that Miss Mary had fallen to sleep on the lounge while waiting for him; and if her eyes had not been half-closed when she let him in, she might have noticed how wild and white was his face. He went upstairs without a word, and Miss Mary could hear him pacing up and down his room as she sank to slumber.

Sunday morning dawned clear and crisp, and Miss Mary and her mother were dressed and had breakfast laid, but no Hank came downstairs. At ten o'clock the horses were not harnessed—Miss Mary had gone out and fed them—and Mass was said five miles away. His mother went upstairs with a slow tread. Hank lay in bed with his eyes closed, his head pillowed on his arms. She called him, gently first, then sharply when he did not answer. He opened his eyes and looked at her.

"Do you know what time it is?" she asked.

"Yes," he said. "It's after ten."

The widow's eyes opened wide with surprise. "Would you be late for Mass?" she cried.

"I don't care," he said, sullenly, "I'm not going."

The widow walked with a cane. She stood and stared at her son for one speechless second. Then she thumped her cane upon the floor.

"Get up!" she thundered. "Whatever the cause of this madness, you shall go to Mass while I live!"

Hank got up and harnessed the horses and drove with them to Mass. Next day Kittie Klein went away on a visit, and on Tuesday Hank went on the first drunk of his life. Would to God that it had been the last!

Things went headlong to ruin then, despite his mother's and Miss Mary's efforts to keep up. When, in a month, a repentant and a sobered Kittie came home to reclaim her lover, it was too late. That last quarrel had been the bitterest thing of Hank's life. He had run away from the scene of his unhappiness and was tramping the country "looking for a job." The railroad invariably gets these rambling ones, and Hank became a switchman in the yards at Sayre. Something in the reckless risk of this life no doubt appealed to the man's weak misery.

The following year the mortgage was foreclosed, and the widow died. Kittie Klein was there when she died. In spite of the coldness and disapproval with which they treated her, Kittie clung to these relatives of her lost lover. Hank had not reached her dying bed. Her fading old eyes sought bravely to outstare death until he should come. The priest stood by, the last Sacraments having been administered, reverently reading the prayers for the dying. The widow's face was calm but for that one straining; she was ready and glad to meet her Maker. Her breath became more labored, and death dew gathered on her forehead. It was all too evident that she could not last until her son came. She sought Miss Mary's grief-drawn face and turned from it to sobbing Kittie Klein. Her eyes said much, but they were softened and pitying.

"Tell my son—I will—watch—over him," she said, and died.

Kittie Klein did not see Hank to deliver that message, for Hank would not see her. Even when she had followed them to Sayre after the death of her parents and a consequent change of fortunes, her one-time lover so managed it that he never encountered her. Miss Mary, with all a woman's unforgiving pride, had little sympathy for poor Kittie in her lonely state, and for fifteen years Kittie had not been able to break through the wall of Miss Mary's cold disdain.

Hank had not gone to Mass since his mother's death, and it was twenty years now since he had gone to his duty. Miss Mary's sad old face bore marks of the heartsick worry which this had caused her. Every prayer and act of her life was wholly for his redemption. It was the one boon that she craved from God.

"If nothing more, let it be the grace of a happy death, dear God," she prayed again and again.

Hank knew that she was incessantly praying for him. Sometimes he scoffed at her. The railroad had hardened him until he was a bit of unreasoning mechanism. He had drunk until he thought that he could not live without it, and he had lost all pride in his personal appearance. At forty, Hank was unbelievably changed from the gay, handsome, healthy youth whom Kittie Klein had first loved.

To-day Miss Mary was even shorter than usual in her replies to the little dressmaker. There had been a big smash-up in the freight-yards the night before, and some one had been killed. It hurt Miss Mary to think of it. Dear God, how near Hank was to death every night of his life! And his soul!—ah! that was the worst of it!

An old white-haired lady in faultless widow's weeds was going into church just ahead of them. She walked with a cane, which she hit upon the ground, determinedly, as she walked. Miss Mary and the little dressmaker exchanged a sudden glance; the same thought had come to both of them.

"How like—" Kittie Klein began, impulsively.

Miss Mary's mouth set hard, with a click. She turned from her companion and swept into the church, her cheeks burning with resentment, her eyes bright with sudden tears.

The little dressmaker could not catch up with her after Mass. Miss Mary could not bear to see Kittie just then.

* * * * *

It was that very week that Hank was to lay off and did not. There was no good reason for his postponing this desired vacation. The hand of God guides our acts.

The little dressmaker was making a bride's dress, and she had

sat up late into the night to finish it. It had been very hot all day and evening, and the big kerosene lamp in her room had drawn added heat and many flies. These buzzed around her now and made her nervous with their droning noise. The clock ticked monotonously, and the heavy night breeze blew the window curtains at her back with a rubbing, flapping sound. Off in the freight-yards the engines shrieked and clanged their bells, and the switching cars came together with intermittent crashes. She shivered at each new crash and patted down with caressing fingers a fold of the wedding gown. She had wept many bitter tears over its making. The memory of her own wedding-gown folded away in lavender blossoms lived very dear to her heart.

Kittie Klein was not a brave woman. She was a timid one, and now, as she sat alone at night, she had barricaded her opened window with a curious arrangement of chairs to thwart any intruder's attempts to enter. She blessed herself when a belated wayfarer's step passed along the board walk beneath her windows, and she breathed more freely when it had echoed away into the distance. The hollow ring of the clock made her heart quicken; and when suddenly, without a warning step, a knock sounded at her door, fear seemed to drive the breath from her body. She crushed her hands into the wedding-gown and sat, unable to stir. The clock said three-thirty. Who could it be at this unearthly hour?

The knock sounded again, impatiently. It was a light, feeble knock, like a child's.

"Who's there?" she called. She stood up, grasping the table, and her knees shook her whole body. There was no answer. "Who's there?" she called again.

The knock was repeated and prolonged with feeble strength.

Kittie grasped the scissors in her right hand and the lamp in her left and went to the door. She unlocked it with trembling fingers, and opening it cautiously, with her light held up, peered out into the porch. The night was without moon or star, an inky blackness.

A small, thin boy stood in the porch. He had on overalls with

a bib over the shoulders and a pair of little bare arms. His hat was tattered around his face. He was unmistakably a railroader's child, but the little dressmaker did not seem to recognize him.

"What *do* you want?" she exclaimed.

"There's a man been hurt under the big bridge, and he wants the priest," the child piped. "I seen your light, and I'm afraid to go alone."

"You poor darling!" cried Kittie. "I'll go right along with you!"

She turned and hurried back into the room, screwing down the light as she went. She set it on the table and ran back to the door, just as she was, without waiting to throw a wrap over her perspiring shoulders. The dying light of her lamp shone into the porch and showed it empty. She called to the child and ran to the gate, but she could not see him. Fear choked her. The freight cars in the yard just then came together with a mighty crash, and somewhere a yardman yelled an order. His voice was terrible in the night air. It seemed to give wings to Kittie's feet. The child had said that a man had been injured under the big bridge and that he wanted a priest. She tore open the gate and ran out over the uneven board walk. At the corner she turned toward the church.

She had been running some minutes before she heard the footsteps beside her. She turned her head; she felt that some one was running with her, but she could see no one. She looked over her shoulder and ran faster. She was no longer a young girl nor lithe, but fear spurred her onward.

In a little while she knew that footsteps persistently kept beside her, and before she reached the corner she heard the labored breathing of a spent runner at her right.

The little dressmaker fell up the parochial steps and pounded upon the door.

"Father, Father Perschal!" she cried, "a man is dying in the yards and wants you!"

The good priest had put his head out of the upper window.

"Why, why, Miss Kittie!" he cried, "I'll be with you in a moment."

Kittie threw herself about, her back against the door panels, and peered into the darkness. She called, but no one answered her. She could see nor hear no human thing.

"I must be going crazy!" thought the little dressmaker.

The priest joined her in an incredibly short time, and they started back toward the yards on a run.

"Who is it that is hurt, my child?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know, Father!" she cried. "A child came to the door and told me that a man had been hurt under the big bridge and that he wanted a priest, and when I stepped out to come with him to get you the child was gone!"

The priest looked at her strangely. He took her arm to aid her tired steps, for somehow it seemed quite natural to both of them that she should be going with the man of God on this strange night mission.

And now again as she ran, on her other side, the little dressmaker heard a third person running, a little ahead of them this time, as if guiding and urging them onward. She wondered if the priest heard the footsteps, too. His face was white and strained, and his brows were knitted. The uneven boards trembled beneath their feet, and now and then a dog barked at them.

Down the main street they sped and turned down the black, bush-lined path that led beneath the great bridge. Lights were moving about on the ground before them, and there was a curiously hushed confusion all about. Kittie's throbbing heart grew suddenly still with choking horror. She had remembered all at once that Hank's shanty was here, beneath the great bridge.

An engine was snorting at the brink of the ditch beneath the bridge and beside it, a man was upon his knees holding the head of a prostrate comrade.

"It's poor old Hank Murphy," a grimy fellow told the little dressmaker, kindly, surprise at seeing her stamped upon his shining black face. "The engine just struck him backing up."

"*Just* struck him!" cried Kittie.

"Not a minute ago," said the man. "We all saw it, but we hadn't time to do a thing!"

The men gathered back, respectfully, toward Kittie and the shanty and for the first time in twenty years, Hank was alone with a confessor. Miss Mary's prayers were answered in God's own way.

"Didn't you send a little boy for the priest?" persisted Kittie, dazedly.

"He was just hit," the men repeated, staring at her. "Blue Pete struck out in a minute for the doctor and Hank's sister, but he ain't had time to get back yet."

"Hit just now," the dressmaker repeated to herself, as though awakening from a dream, "*hit just now!*" Then, somewhere on the night breeze behind her, a voice floated to her ear: "Tell my son—," it said, "I will—watch—over him."

When Miss Mary, awakened by the kindhearted railroader, came stumbling down to the tracks, a wrapper thrown carelessly over her nightdress and opened at her shriveled neck, and her sparse gray hair straggling about a wild face, the doctor was already bending over Hank. The priest was beside him, too, kneeling in the cinders, praying as only a priest can pray. The men had brought up the stretcher. Miss Mary brushed against it as she rushed forward.

"O my God!" she shrieked and threw out her old hands to Hank.

The doctor put her aside roughly.

"Hurry, boys, the stretcher!" he cried, in a strange, ringing voice, "and get this man to my office as quick as you can! It looks like only a few ribs broken—" He stopped and chuckled, nervously; he was a soft-hearted man. "It's not often, boys, an engine strikes a man and lets him live to tell the tale!"

The men picked up the stretcher with unspeakable relief written on their rough faces, and Hank was borne away, groaning a little, but with such a look upon his face as it had not worn in twenty years. The priest followed them.

"By Jingo!" cried the remaining switchman, in his rough,

coarse way that meant so much less because it was but part of the iron-bound life that he led, "I believe that Hank ain't done for yet, Miss Mary! An' I dunno what saved him!"

Miss Mary stumbled away from the track. The little dressmaker rose up from the darkness and confronted her. "I went after the priest, Mary!" she cried. "Your mother came to the door with a little boy and sent me after the priest! I couldn't see her, but I saw the child, and I heard her running beside me all the way, and I could hear her breathe! Oh! Mary, Hank's been to confession and he isn't dead!"

Miss Mary shook her head in dumb bewilderment and mumbled wildly. Her breath gurgled in her throat, her eyes were dry and staring, and a feverish red had crept into her blanched cheeks. She stumbled past and up the black, bush-lined path, looking straight ahead and Kittie Klein followed her, weeping hysterically now. Once she looked down and saw that Miss Mary's feet were bare and bleeding from the sharp cinders.

At the doctor's steps, they met a man coming out.

"The ribs on his right side and his right leg are broken," he said to Miss Mary in a kind of awe-struck voice; the railroad didn't often leave its victims thus. "They're goin' to set the leg now, and then the doctor says he can be carried straight home."

Miss Mary answered him, incoherently, an uncomprehending look of fear upon her wild face. Kittie had her own shoes off and was upon her knees, forcing them on Miss Mary's bare feet.

"I'll go right home for you and get his bed ready," the little dressmaker was saying. "You go in and hold his hand while they set his leg. Poor old Hank!" she added, wistfully.

Miss Mary turned upon her, fiercely. "I guess I can get his bed ready myself!" she choked. She stood looking down at the little woman kneeling at her feet. The wild look went slowly from her face. "And Hank ain't *killed?*" she murmured dazedly.

The little dressmaker sobbed anew. "Ain't God good!" she cried.

Miss Mary stooped and lifted the little dressmaker to her

feet. "I wouldn't have hysterics!" she said in her old sharp way. "Go on and hold his hand yourself!"

She gave Kittie Klein a gentle push toward the doctor's door; the years had suddenly rolled away.

And Kittie Klein went into the doctor's office, her pale, faded face all pretty with a new light. Hank would live and the past was past. The men turned curious eyes upon her. They didn't know, but that didn't matter. She went to Hank, and he put out his hand to her. Outside, Miss Mary was hurrying home to get things ready for the coming of Hank. Her face had not held a look like this for many years.

A NÜRNBERG TREASURE.

BY KATHARINE JENKINS.

THE sun was shining gloriously. The trees and gay colored flowers, the birds singing and hopping from branch to branch, the very breath of the beauteous May day, made a glad hymn of praise and thanks to the Giver of all the bounteous gifts of nature. But bird or flower, tree or sunshine, was unheeded by Marjorie Dix, as with anxious thoughts and eyes filled with, as yet, unshed tears, she hurried excitedly up and down, in and out of the crooked, bewildering streets of a little Bavarian town. Small as the town was, Marjorie was lost, and knowing not one word of the language, had she met any one she could not have inquired her way back to the Inn.

Besides, the streets seemed deserted, and the low, quaint houses presented only inhospitable-looking fronts, with their closed doors and windows.

"I suppose the people are all away at work in the fields, or busy in their kitchens. They are so industrious. And, oh, oh!" Here Marjorie, a spoiled, petted little American bride of a couple of months, began to cry in earnest, and had the good folks of the village come to their doors, a veritable Niobe would have been found in their midst. Great, no doubt, would have been their amazement to have seen a pretty young foreign lady, handsomely dressed, dissolved in tears on a day when the world was so full of joy.

The cause of all these tears had arisen from a wish expressed by Marjorie, and the desertion of a two months' bride was the result of the overzeal of her devoted husband, the grave Professor of Analytical Chemistry in —— University.

Why this learned Professor had chosen frivolous little Marjorie for his wife, the world, and particularly the world comprising the University circle, could not understand. At a symposium convened when the event was announced, the wives of his fellow-professors declared her a feather-top.

One voice in the set was raised in her defense, that of old Mrs. R., the Dean's wife, who pronounced the Professor's pardon and Marjorie's eulogy by quietly remarking:

"You forget, my dears,

'What lovely things
Are fashioned out of eighteen springs.'"

It is true Marjorie was a thoughtless young thing, with perhaps less than the average amount of education; but Love laughs at letters and arts, just as he does at bolts and bars. And so, one day, Dan Cupid,

"A thread of silk to string his bow,
A needle for his arrow,"

pierced the heart of the heretofore cold-as-stone Professor, and when he began to inquire into the cause of his wound he found that the silken thread had bound him hand and foot to the piquant, pretty little girl whom he had noticed at the University lectures, teas and receptions. Once in love, like a cyclone, this ardent lover swept all opposition aside, and before Marjorie fully realized the wealth and depth of the fund of happiness in store for her through a noble man's love, she found herself married and whisked off to Europe for a three-months' tour. It was not that she did not love the Professor. Oh, no! But she had looked up to him as something far above her, and ever since she had first seen him, he had been her beau ideal of all that was perfect in man. That he should ask her to be his wife seemed almost too wonderful for the girl in her simplicity to believe. However, so it was, and with ardent love on his part, reverence and perfect trust on hers, this fortunate couple started out.

The girl's fresh enthusiasm was a source of delight to the Professor, and to travel with her over, to him, well known

paths, a two-fold pleasure. The world of letters was as unfamiliar to her as the countries through which they were traveling, so a wealth of enjoyment lay open before her. It was merely that she had grown up without intellectual cultivation, and when the opportunity came she grasped it with almost feverish delight, and her husband had the keen pleasure of seeing her mind expand and unfold like a fair flower.

And so it came to pass that when the couple reached "the art sanctified city of Nürnberg" and saw there the treasures of ancient pottery and porcelain, it was only natural that the Professor should read his wife that exquisitely beautiful story, "The Nürnberg Stove," which has delighted old and young for at least two generations, and in connection with this story to read all he could find concerning Augustine Hirschvogel, the great master of the potter's art. Marjorie listened with intense interest.

"Could we not have a Nürnberg stove, too, to take back to our new home?" she exclaimed, little realizing how rare and hard to find a genuine antique would be. It was the first wish she had expressed since her marriage, and the Professor, charmed at her artistic development, inwardly vowed that if it took half a year's salary, have it she should, even though he had to travel all Europe to find it. The search began, and the remotest villages and hamlets were visited, the couple thus seeing far more of the beauties of the country than is ordinarily the case with travelers without a definite object in view. Hearing that in a certain obscure town he would be likely to come across a stove such as he craved, the Professor traveled hither.

Leaving Marjorie to dream and wonder at her leisure over the carving and stained glass windows they found in the church, the Professor went off to continue his quest. At first Marjorie was so intent on admiring her beautiful surroundings that she did not realize the flight of time. But when the old clock in the town rang out its warning tone, and Marjorie, on looking at her watch, awoke to the fact that the Professor had been away from her several hours, she was genuinely alarmed. I am afraid

that she was a dependent little creature. Certainly she did not possess the bump of locality, for, instead of returning as they had come to the church, she wandered farther and farther away from the Inn where they were stopping. And at last we find her in tears standing in the narrow, crooked street.

Help is always at hand in our direst need if only we trust, so just as Marjorie was almost giving up all hope, down the street clattered three young peasant girls in their noisy wooden shoes. Marjorie ran to them, and in her joy at seeing the girls forgot her inability to make herself understood. She poured out all her woes and begged them to take her back to her Inn, telling them too why she was alone, for she could not bear for even these peasant girls to think for an instant that her great Professor was inattentive to her. The girls, not understanding one word of all her long speech, and not knowing what to make of her excited manner and tears, stood looking at her with wide-eyed, open-mouthed astonishment. In their slow, stolid way the idea perhaps crossed their minds that the poor girl was demented and had strayed away from her friends. Seeing them look at her in such a provokingly stupid manner, poor Marjorie was again dissolved in tears.

"Oh!" she cried, "I wish I had never heard of a Nürnberg stove, or of Hirschvogel!"

"Nürnberg? Hirschvogel?" exclaimed one of the girls, a gleam of intelligence flitting across her plain face.

"Yes, yes," cried Marjorie. "Nürnberg stove! Augustine Hirschvogel!" And then she started off into another flood of tears.

The girls held a sort of conference together, and then by signs and smiles they induced Marjorie to go with them. One of the girls happened to know that in the house adjoining her father's there was a fine old porcelain stove, and that a gentleman was to come to see it that very day.

Marjorie's distress vanished when on arriving at the peasant's house she found her husband down on his knees before a huge porcelain stove examining minutely every detail.

"Ah, Marjorie," he exclaimed, "I have found a Nürnberg at last! Here are all the royal signs, the very hall-marks of its genuineness; the brass feet and door; the faience, the true Hirschvogel date and initials—and, dear one, I have bought it for you."

He looked so delighted, so triumphant, and, Marjorie thought, so handsome beside the humble peasant folk who had crowded into the little house.

"But these people?" queried Marjorie. "Certainly they want it themselves, like the little boy in the story."

The Professor laughed and pointed to the gold pieces he had laid on the table.

Marjorie glanced around the room. Astonishment was written on some faces, dismay on others. In one corner stood a young girl weeping bitterly. Marjorie went to her and took her hand. The girl kissed Marjorie's hand in return, and then in very broken English told her story. She had been maid to a very wealthy English lady, and had just come home to find her father dead, and her step-mother, a cold, money-loving woman, preparing to sell off all the old household treasures and to leave the town, which she declared was too small and slow for her.

"The stove has belonged to my people ever since it was made almost, and my father always told me it should be my dower. Now I will be portionless and Fritz will not want me," sobbed the girl.

"Have you really bought the stove, dear?" asked Marjorie of her husband.

"Yes."

"And it is mine," queried Marjorie, "to do with just as I choose?"

The Professor nodded.

"Oh, you are the dearest darling in the whole wide world!" And the impetuous girl threw her arms around the grave Professor's neck, and in the sight of all gave him a hearty hug. Perhaps she was a feather-top as her critics had said. No doubt she was wanting in dignity. But as a recompense for these de-

ficiencies she had the gentlest, the tenderest, the most loving heart that ever beat in a girl's breast, and the joy of joys for her was to make people happy.

"Where is your Fritz, Roeschen dear?" asked Marjorie.

A handsome young fellow stepped forward and stood by Roeschen.

Marjorie's eyes, eyes deep and blue as violets wet with the dew of the night, deepened with sympathy—for who so loves a pair of lovers as a new-made bride?

Taking Fritz and Roeschen's rough brown hands in her own slender white one, she said:

"The stove is yours, Roeschen dear. It is your wedding present. And when in the years to come," here Marjorie's voice trembled and sank almost to a whisper, and tears filled the tender eyes, "little children play around its beautiful feet, will you teach them to pray for your friends in far-away America?"

As they walked back to the Inn the Professor and his wife were strangely quiet. Marjorie's slender hand trembled as it lay on her husband's arm.

"Have I displeased you, dear?" she asked in a sweet, humble voice.

"No," replied the Professor.

"I know," she went on, "that I am not worthy of you, and I often wonder why and how you could love me."

"It is I who am unworthy, Marjorie child; but I love you to-day ten thousand times more than I ever did before, and if we were not here in the open street, I should take you in my arms this minute."

Marjorie sighed. "Ah, Love is so blind," she said.

"A wise man has written: 'Love is said to be blind, but is not. It is an extra eye which shows us what is most worthy of regard. To see the best is to see most clearly, and it is the lover's privilege,'" quoted the Professor.

"That writer must have been a very nice sort of man," said simple Marjorie.

"He was," said the Professor.

IN AFTER YEARS.

BY MARGARET E. JORDAN.

THERE are trials that mar human lives, and there are still other trials that make them; again the selfsame trials may mar one life and make another. When the great blow fell upon Philip Masterson in his young manhood, he was not sure for a long time what the result would be, despite his fixed resolve that it should bring out all there was best in him.

He had been, all his lifetime, "as good as engaged" to Laura Caldwell; at least, he felt thus about it, though no word of engagement had passed between them. As boy and girl they were "neighbors' children," and inseparable; as youth and maiden they were parted on account of school, meeting only in the vacations. Upon one of the last of these he realized that their two lives did not run as closely together as in earlier days. She had grown into a serious young woman, who looked forward to the future as a place of great and immediate responsibilities, not only for self, but for humanity in general; while he felt that responsibilities would be in order by and by, but that life's field for some few years was all right for enjoyments the most care free. Nevertheless, he held to the thought of one day "settling down," but before that day he would change, he would become more worthy of the noble girl his heart had chosen.

Perhaps had he said all this to her matters might have remained as his heart would have had them; perhaps all would have been well had he even spoken one little direct word of love. If he was silent, it was because he felt that love without developed, strongly marked character, would not win a woman such as she had grown to be. He had not kept pace with her moral

growth. He must make some giant strides to catch up; but not just yet. So he had reasoned.

And Laura Caldwell?

There was a night just after his last departure for college when she lingered in the village chapel long after the other worshipers had departed—lingered so long that the old sexton, who knew her well, came to her and said:

"I won't hurry you; the door is locked, but the key is in it. Turn it and go out when you're ready. I'll be back and lock up again."

She thanked him, and for another quarter of an hour the fierce interior struggle within the girl's heart went on.

"Thank God, it is over!" she murmured then, as she turned the key and gained the street. "It was only a foolish girl dream. I had to awaken and be a woman. We are neither of us that which we were in childhood days. Even had he spoken the words I thought to hear, and had I answered him as my foolish heart tells me I would have done, it would all have been a mistake. Earth is not to me the mere playground he seems to think it must be to him. Life is all too short for the mighty work it holds."

There are times when a soul's true place in life remains all unrevealed until some such a sacrifice of early heart hopes or ambitions has been made completely. It was so with Laura Caldwell. By and by she accepted an uncle's invitation to visit him in the West. There she met some of the earnest educators of the day, and as the helpmeet of one, older than herself by many years, she foresaw a real life such as the heart attraction of early days had never held forth.

* * * * *

"Ha! A letter from Laura!"

It was a care free student, flushed with the exultation of a hard won victory on the baseball field, that tore open the seal of the missive.

It was a man with stern set face and a heart filled with

earnest purpose that returned the thrice-read pages to their folds, and with an earnestly uttered "So help me God!" entered upon a new life.

To Philip Masterson, her boy lover, away from whom her life had grown, Laura Caldwell had penned the word of her approaching marriage. He thanked her, amidst earnest, prayerful wishes for her future happiness, that she had not given it to him to hear the message from other lips.

He was but just entering upon his professional career, a few years later, with purpose earnest as her own, when the sad news reached him of her early death. His profession and the good of his fellow-men thenceforth occupied his life. At a distance she had watched him, he felt sure. The word of commendation, that from her would have been sweet to hear, though spoken in friendship instead of in love, could never fall upon him now.

* * * * *

All around, for the miles that made the circuit of Dr. Masterson's ordinary practise, people wondered when he married. A man in life's prime, staid, earnest, successful, often called afar for his well-known skill, the marvel was not that he had not remained his whole lifetime single, it was rather that he, "who could have had any one," should have chosen a pretty little stranger from no one knew where. She was one of a party of young girls who had come to spend the summer at the one hotel the place boasted of. But the doctor's young bride had not even the prestige of being a boarder at the hotel. She belonged to a band of college students who secured a pleasant vacation, and replenished their meager purses by filling various offices in the household departments. The village was a new and pretty suburb of the city in which the doctor had settled years before in the very opening of his professional career. There was a flavor of romance about it all, however, that made for the love story of the revered physician a tender place in everybody's memory, and for his young and pretty bride a warm spot in all hearts.

There had been an accident. Through somebody's fault the

rowboat containing the students had been upset. No one had been in real danger save Mildred Williams, who was rescued only when "going down the third time." It was not the doctor who rescued her from the waves—one of the ordinary boatmen did that—but he was summoned hastily when the party reached the hotel, for the chill from the drenching, and the shock, produced an effect that called for medical attention.

Had any one present known the doctor's early heart history, and ever seen the face and heard the voice of Laura Caldwell, that one, at least, would have understood the more than professional interest he took in Mildred Williams. He was fidelity itself; but no one seemed able to form an opinion as to when the professional visits ended and the visits of courtship began. Only the doctor knew that their beginning was simultaneous.

One day, with perfect health restored, she seemed fairer and more youthful than when he had won her consent to be his bride. He deplored his age, for her sake; he went even so far as to offer to release her if aught troubled her regarding her engagement to him.

"Child, do you realize that I am old enough to be your father?" he questioned her, looking intently upon her. "Yet," he added, looking away and over the expanse of waters, then turning to her again, "yet your face, your voice, your heart, your very self, it seems to me, have been part of my life since my own infancy!"

She toyed with a jagged rock near which they sat, her eyes drooping, the soft color coming and going. Then she looked full upon him, laying her hand upon his, and said:

"I have mamma's face and voice, they all tell me, who remember her; she died when I was but a baby. I guess, Philip dear, I must have a heart like hers, too, for hers went out as mine has done. Papa told me not long before he died that when he and mamma first met he was old enough to be her father, and yet she loved him, and for their brief married life their union was a perfect one. Mamma was 'old for her years,' as people say—and, Philip, so am I."

The moment was opportune for the life story Philip Masterson then told.

"And you knew who I was from the very first?" she questioned.

"I knew Laura had married Herbert Williams, and that there was a little daughter. Your face and voice told me the rest."

A shade of disappointment fell upon her.

"I am to you then but a memory of my mother," she said, with a sigh.

His eyes glowed with impassioned light; his voice thrilled with tenderness.

"Your mother was the passing dream of long ago. You, Mildred, are its blissful, blessed realization!"

"To hold your love, to be your helpmate, strong and true, 'until death do us part,' Philip, surely, with God's help, youth need be no bar to this." She reached out her two hands freely to him, knowing he was waiting for the voluntary surrender. "Nor age," she added, looking up at him archly.

"Nor age!" he cried, "So help me God!"

And the shadows were lifted.

HOW DAN WENT HOME.

BY GRACE KEON.

THE boys around Eighth Street called Dan Mulvaney a "character." Some of the "boys" were great politicians now. But no matter how high up he was or how low down, from leader to heeler in the "District," when thoughts turned to childhood's days, Dan Mulvaney, the "character," came first to the tip of the tongue—Dan Mulvaney and his doings.

"You don't mean to say old Dan is alive yet? Good powers, the man must be nearly a hundred!"

But Dan Mulvaney wasn't a hundred. He was seventy-four. The constitution built up under the beautiful Irish skies, and the health gained running barefoot around the bogs, clung to him—had been a reserve fund in the bank of health, lasting all his demands upon it. He was a good-natured soul, with eyes that could dance to this very day of his old age with a certain sparkle, and a smile that still spread itself in sunny expansiveness over his honest face.

For years he had earned a precarious living peddling tinware, on a small pushcart loaded with bright objects. "Every article on the wagon three or nine cents!" as he told you himself. There were no other prices. Either you paid what he asked, or you didn't pay at all. Dan Mulvaney never stooped to the tricks of his competitors—he couldn't be "jewed" down.

People were always glad to see Dan—and Dan's companion, Dinny, who was of equal importance. Not much to look at, old—like Dan himself, but with eyes as honest and true, despite the fact that he was only a mongrel dog, taken in out of pity one bitter winter's day—and the inseparable companion, ever since, of the tender-hearted old man.

They loved each other: the man, with protecting tenderness;

the dog, with adoration for the hand that fed it and caressed it. He knew no greater worship than fidelity, this poor little yellow cur, and, giving that, gave his all, absolutely, unswervingly. Nor could anything or any one tempt him to betray his trust, though out of curiosity many tried to induce him to do so.

Dan Mulvaney was too generous to have accumulated much of wealth in all the years that he had spent in honest toil. He had one great ambition, nevertheless, and that one ambition had helped to keep his blue eyes bright and his honest face healthy-hued. Since reasonable ambition God denies to no man.

Years before, when he, a sturdy, red-cheeked son of Erin, had found it necessary to say farewell to his beloved Irish hills, he had left a sweetheart behind him—a young and pretty lassie, who clung to him, weeping, and who promised him her faith. She *had* been true, too. Dan, who was industrious and frugal, saved enough for her passage over. He wrote and told her of his great good fortune. Surely it was good fortune to have got enough together to pay her way to his side, and to start the humble little home he had pictured in his own mind. She wrote back that she could not bear to leave the old folks, who had battled through so many ills, alone—especially now since her brother John had left them to do for himself. It would break their hearts, she said. In tender speech she told him this. Very gently, indeed, she wrote the words, but they drove Dan to desperation. There were many of convivial turn of mind glad to seek the company of the witty, merry young Irishman; indeed, they had always sought it, and now none to his betterment. Despairing immediately of ever having the little home he had pictured so hungrily, Dan found solitude in the corner saloon.

This lasted for six months. People said it was a pity that so healthy and sturdy a young fellow should be going the wrong way—the road that so many healthy and sturdy young fellows had gone before him. It was another letter that brought him to himself. Mary Phillips had received no answer to the last, and she was afraid that Dan was angry. Surely he couldn't be angry because she tried to do what was right? And then she gave him

news of the old home and of the old folks, and spoke of the future with the piety of a loving, hopeful heart.

Though it had been written fifty years before, Dan had that letter yet. The corner saloon saw him no more, and it was then his one ambition became fixed. He wanted to save to go home—go home, and take "the girl" enough to place her above want.

He worked hard—too hard. And yet things did not prosper very much. His hand and heart were both too generous. No one came to Dan Mulvaney with a tale of sorrow who did not receive some portion of his savings.

"God'll bless what's left," he would say, philosophically, "and double it."

"Mary'll be an old woman," he thought, as the years went by—five, ten, fifteen of them. "Mary'll be an old woman fairly by the time I get home."

Mary did not write again to him after that last gentle letter—the letter that had arrested his downward progress. Yet his faith never wavered. Soon, soon, he would have enough to "go home"—to marry Mary, and to settle down in the land of his birth for all the time left to him to live.

When he was fifty the blow fell—the worst blow of all. It had taken him a quarter of a century to accumulate the sum that was his fortune. It took a quarter of a day to sweep away forever every hope of his. The bank that held his savings failed. He could not realize it at first. When he did, he grew disheartened. Not that he cared for money, but for the future that vanished with it. He was no longer a young man. Had this happened in his youth, perhaps it would have taken a stronger thread than "the girl's" letter to keep his feet in the ways of righteousness. Now the simple faith that was his helped him. He started out bravely enough; but the high hopes of youth fade with it. The old can not face the future with the smiling countenance of young manhood. The spirit seemed gone. He dared hold no thought of ever making "the girl" comfortable; but at least he'd try to get enough together to go back and see her just once before he died.

People smiled at Dan Mulvaney, and quizzed him a little.

"Sure, man alive, she's married and a widow twice over! Would it be wasting her time a fine girl like that would be doing?"

"Maybe," laughed Dan. "Maybe not. But she's still the only girl in old Ireland or out of it. She'd be a fool, I don't doubt, to wait for a man like Mulvaney. But, if she's livin' or dead, she can't help bein' my girl, just the same."

Nothing could batter down such optimism as that. After a while they ceased to smile, and really began to consider what old Dan's chances were to get home to "the girl," if it were only for a year or two before he died.

"He's that determined," said one of his cronies. "He's a quiet chap, that means a whole lot and speaks mighty little."

"He'll get home again," said another.

"Troth, Dan's a character," was the comment of a third.

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It had been bad weather during the whole month of February, down into the middle of March; such bad weather that for the past two weeks Dan Mulvaney had felt the weight of years pressing him too heavily to dare face outdoors. He drew a little on the meager savings, and stayed at home in his one room, hugging the fire closely. So did Dinny—for Dinny was old, too, and loved warmth.

"God help the poor souls that haven't got a fire, Dinny!" said Dan Mulvaney. "We ought to thank the Lord every day of our lives that He is so generous to us."

Dinny blinked his eyes once or twice as if he agreed with him. The old man got up and went to the window. It was not so comfortable at the window as at the fire; but Dinny, after a grunt or two of disapproval, followed his master, putting his fore-paws on the sill, and looking out, even as Dan did. There was a blinding snowstorm—the flakes so big and thick that Dan could scarcely distinguish the houses opposite.

"It'll surely clear off for St. Patrick's Day," said the old man. "Surely 'twon't be such weather as this for St. Patrick's Day."

Dinny wagged his tail.

"I'd better put on what coal is left in the scuttle, lad, and

get down to Dillon's for more before it's too late. Maybe there's a blizzard coming. So, then. We'll keep the stove going all this night, anyhow, Dinny."

He lifted the scuttle, poured its contents on the red coals, raked the fire, and, with an admonitory word to the dog, carefully shut the door behind him, and went on.

The stairs were long, they were dark, and they were narrow; but Dan knew his way down them blindfolded. He felt for the rickety banisters, and held on tightly as he started to descend. No one was there to see how it happened, and Dan himself never knew. His foot slipped, probably. He made a wild clutch at the worn railing of the banisters. It gave way under his fingers. He felt himself going, then—and with a sickening horror at his heart—screamed aloud. Over and over he tumbled, the iron scuttle making a dreadful noise, drowning the rush of his body and its thud as he landed at the bottom, and lay there, a quivering, inert mass. Doors flew open. Neighbors thronged into the hall. Upstairs there was the whine of a dog; but in the excitement no one noticed it, and Dinny could not reach his beloved master, even though instinct told him something was wrong.

"God save us, it's Dan Mulvaney!" said Mrs. Clancy. "He's fallen the full length of the stairs." She bent over him, bringing his head up to her knee. "Look at the blood on him. Ayeh! Poor old Dan, what's come over ye, at all, at all?"

Dan could not answer: he was oblivious to everything and every one. There was a big gash in the side of his head, where the sharp lip of the iron scuttle had wounded him, and one arm was twisted helplessly.

The usual crowd collected. Some one went for a policeman, and the policeman rang for an ambulance. The surgeon pronounced the old man's condition serious.

"Broken arm, probably fractured skull, and internal injuries," was the brief comment. The helpless form was wrapped in a blanket, laid on a stretcher, and carried out to the ambulance, between two rows of spectators, who had gathered in spite of the storm.

When, three days later, Dan Mulvaney woke up, he could not understand the meaning of the strange position in which he found himself. He stared straight at the blank white ceiling; then his gaze sought the foot of the bed, encountering the soft glance of a pair of dark-gray eyes on the way. There was a screen drawn around him. He did not know the meaning of that, nor did he care. He felt sore and stiff. One arm was bandaged.

He picked at the bedclothes nervously with the uninjured fingers. What was it? What had happened? How had he come here—in a strange place?

The very strain of thinking helped to clear his brain. His lids drooped, and the nurse, fearing that he was slipping off into unconsciousness again, laid her hand on his forehead. At the touch he half-smiled in a pleased, gratified fashion.

She was quite young, and this was one of her first cases. The tender pity on her sweet face was refreshing. Dan Mulvaney felt as if there was something holy looking at him out of her pure eyes.

"Is there any one you would like to see?" she asked, gently. "Any one we can send for?"

"The priest," he said, faintly. "Only the priest. You're—you're the girl, ain't ye?"

He hesitated, as if afraid of her reply. She did not understand, but she smiled.

"I'm the girl," she said, brightly, "and the priest is here. He has been waiting a long time. I'll call him now."

Dan put out his hot and nervous fingers, and she clasped them encouragingly.

"God bless ye, girl!"

The priest was at his side the next instant—the pastor of Dan's own parish. He knew well what this simple, generous, blameless life had been, and he felt, as he anointed him, that Dan Mulvaney need not be afraid to die.

Dan lay very quiet, murmuring little ejaculations of thanksgiving over and over when Father Purdy left. The young nurse came back then, adjusting the old man's bandages, and raising a

drink to his parched lips. His eyes followed her every movement.

"How did ye get here—and in time, too?" he asked, feebly. "Whisht, acushla! Sit down beside me, and let me talk to ye. I'm an old, old man, Mary—an' ye're the same as ever! The same gray eyes, an' red cheeks, an' the crinkly hair o' ye! How is it ye never grew a day beyond the twenties?"

She thought he was raving, and the pity deepened on her face.

"Poor old soul!" she said. "Poor, lonely old soul! Dying, without one of your own near you! God help you through your dreary death, poor man!"

There were tears in her eyes.

Dan Mulvaney smiled.

"Don't be pityin' me, Mary," he said. "Pityin' me—when God's that good He brung ye to me, even at the end of the day! I couldn't go to ye, Mary," he went on, catching his breath in a sob. "I tried so hard, but things happened. The bank failed. An' after that me heart failed me. I couldn't get the courage—I lost all sperrit, then. I'm an old, old man, Mary—old enough to go; but I was always true to home, an'—an' to the girl."

She smiled, tenderly.

"I know you were," she said. "I know you were. And I know you tried as hard as ever you could. So don't worry about it now."

The earnest, beseeching voice had made her heart ache, even though it was but the incoherent speech of a dying man. His blue eyes were so clear and so honest. "Irish eyes," she thought, with a flash of love for the land she had never seen, but which was dear to her by reason of the tales they told her of it.

"I'm glad," said Dan Mulvaney, contentedly. "I was afraid ye'd be thinking me one of them lads that couldn't keep their word. Tell me, Mary, did ye keep the blue ring I sent ye home, that year, in memory of me first St. Patrick's Day away from ye? We thought so much of Patrick's Day home, didn't we, Mary?"

For answer the girl held up her left hand. Around her little

finger was a circlet of gold, set with a blue stone. Dan saw it, and sighed once more in satisfaction. But the girl was wondering.

"Ayeh!" he said. "It's that, sure enough! Ye've got the broken shillin', too, I dunno? The other half o' mine is home—home—home—"

He paused, hesitated, tried to raise himself on one elbow, wildly.

"Dinny!" he gasped. "What have they done with Dinny? Mary, Mary, he'll be frozen to death in that cold room without me. His heart'll be broken, poor little chap—"

"The neighbors have him," the girl said, soothingly. "He can come to-morrow."

He lay exhausted, looking at her with wistful eyes.

"They'd let a dog in to see me? A hospital ain't so bad a place, then, afther all, is it?"

A dog! Dinny was only a dog!

"He's no great breed," said Dan. "But he's an honest little chap. I hope Mrs. Clancy's got him. She's good-hearted. She'll keep him till—till I get back."

The girl sat down on the chair now.

"You don't want to go away without thinking over it," she said. "I would not say this, only you are a Catholic like myself—and we face death differently. Poor man, you are never going back. You are going home."

"Going home?" echoed Dan. He had fed his heart on the words, so that now they conveyed two meanings to him.

"Going home," said the nurse. "Going home to God—and to the girl," she added, tenderly. "You will try to make up your mind to it? Saving only by a miracle, you can never get well."

"I understand," said Dan, bravely, after a moment. "I'm not sorry. Will you stay?"

"Yes."

"Until—"

"Yes."

"That's the girl. Tell me, *is* it true? My head ain't playin'

me a trick? You *are* the girl? You're Mary Phillips, that I left behind me in County Wicklow? You are now, aren't you?"

The girl stared at him, with parted lips.

"I'm Mary Phillips," she said. "But I never was in County Wicklow, though my father was born there—my father, John Phillips. And my Aunt Mary— It can't be! It's impossible! Tell me, tell me"—she bent above him—"you're not—Dan Mulvaney?"

"I am," he said. "I'm Dan Mulvaney."

The girl was speechless. The name was a familiar household word. She had loved her aunt well. Often and often had she heard the story of Dan Mulvaney from the faithful lips of the gentle woman who had been true to her honest friend, the lover of her youth, her promised husband, and whose own fingers had bestowed upon her one niece the treasured keepsake sent her by her sweetheart that first year of exile—the little blue ring she wore.

"Aunt Mary told me of you," she said. "Many, many times."

"You're that like her!" said Dan.

"The picture of her, folks tell me."

"I'd—I'd like to see her," said Dan. "Is she—?"

"She died to-day one year ago," said Mary Phillips.

"Died?"

Then,

"Ah, Mary! What day is this, child?"

"The seventeenth," she answered. "Aunt Mary is dead just twelve months."

"St. Patrick's Day—Mary's day an' mine. Well, now!"

He was silent.

"How long?" he asked.

She understood.

"An hour—to-night, maybe. I do not know," she said.

"So long?" wearily. "I wish 'twas over. Did she—was she long sick?"

"No," said Mary. "A very short while. She thought you had gone before her; but she never lost her faith in you."

He smiled, happily content.

"Mary knew me," he said. "'Twas unfortunate. I done the best I could. I hope God'll remember I tried to do the best I could, even if I didn't always succeed. He's good to me—very good to me—grantin' me favors even on me death-bed."

"That's true," said the girl. "Many a one dies without being prepared to go. And you are well prepared. Father Purdy said so. So rest easy."

He put his hand on hers, smiling.

"Yes, I'll rest easy. Pray God to have mercy on my soul."

She bowed her head.

* * * * *

When she raised it, she saw there was nothing left for her to do but to close the lids over the bright blue eyes.

"May God have mercy on you!" she breathed. "Poor old man!"

Dan Mulvaney had gone home.

PILGRIMS OF THE NIGHT.

BY REV. T. J. LIVINGSTONE, S.J.

THE usual monthly meeting of the League of the Sacred Heart was being held in the convent of Arlington. The Director, Father Murray, had taken as the subject of his discourse the virtue of zeal. It was a theme that appealed strongly to his feelings, and in consequence his words were unusually eloquent and impressive. This was especially the case when he came to speak of the dignity and merit of cooperating with Christ in the sublime work of saving souls.

The sermon was listened to with rapt attention by all. But there was one little girl present to whom the Father's words came almost like a revelation from heaven. This was Agnes Raleigh, a day scholar, who had just been made a Promoter of the League.

Hitherto she had regarded the work of saving souls as something lying quite beyond the limits of her spiritual horizon; but now she beheld it brought clearly into view and clothed with attractiveness by the fervid eloquence of the priest, just as a distant mountain peak is made visible and glorious by the roseate rays of the morning sun.

She felt that she must do something to take part in this great work. But what?—that was the question. Never mind! she would have a talk with Father Murray about it, and he would tell her what to do.

So, after Benediction was over, she waited for him in the corridor that led from the sacristy to the parlor.

Father Murray was one of those kind-hearted souls with whom children feel perfectly at home. He and Agnes were great friends. In fact, though he wouldn't for the world have it known, he was fonder of this little girl of twelve summers than of anybody else he knew. Not because she was so pretty, for all children seemed pretty to him; nor yet because she was so good, for you couldn't make him believe that any child in his parish was really bad; nor, finally, because she was one of the leaders in her class, for he had his own opinion about the value of school success as a test of ability. No, his special liking for her arose from none of these motives: it had its origin in a different source.

"What attracts me in that child," he once said when speaking of her to a neighboring priest, "is her talent for theology. You smile, I see, at my using this word in connection with a child; but, after all, what is the Catechism but a compendium of theology? Well, what I mean is, that she has a special talent for understanding the truths of our holy religion. So it is only natural that I should feel attracted to her. A musician is naturally drawn toward a pupil with a special aptitude for music; a painter feels instinctively interested in a pupil with a special talent for drawing, and so on. A priest, then, ought to be naturally drawn toward a child with a special gift for heavenly things."

He had discovered this talent in little Agnes the year before, when he was preparing the children for their first communion. In teaching Catechism he used to make the children learn a lesson by heart, then he would explain it to them carefully, and, after that, allow them to ask questions about anything suggested by his explanation.

"Well, sir," he went on to say, "many a time I was simply astounded at the questions asked me by that little girl—so deep an insight did they show into the matter. And when once a point of doctrine had been explained to her, she understood it so thoroughly that I think it would take my namesake, old Dr. Murray, of Maynooth, to puzzle her about it. Do you know that since becoming acquainted with that child I can easily understand

how St. Catherine of old could have put to the blush all those heathen philosophers who engaged in dispute with her at Alexandria."

When the Bishop came to administer Confirmation, of course, Father Murray had to tell him all about Agnes.

The Bishop could not help smiling at the good old priest's enthusiasm about the child, and to please him suggested that Catherine would be a very appropriate name to give her in Confirmation.

"The very thing!" exclaimed Father Murray, delighted. "I wonder how it is I never happened to think of it. Agnes Catherine—purity and wisdom! What a beautiful combination! Your Lordship's suggestion is like an inspiration."

So Agnes received the additional name of Catherine in Confirmation, and Father Murray considered that his opinion of her had, as it were, received episcopal approbation by the very fact.

No wonder, then, that the good priest should have grown so fond of this amiable and gifted child, and that, as on the present occasion, his face should light up with pleasure at sight of her.

"How do you do, Agnes?" he said. "So, you are now a Promoter, an officer of the League of the Sacred Heart. What an honor! I congratulate you, my child."

"Thank you very much, Father. I am going to try to be a good Promoter. But, Father, I came to ask you about something else. It occurred to me while you were preaching."

"Well, child, what is it?"

"It's about saving souls. It seems to me that I ought to do something for this work. You don't know, Father, what an impression your sermon made on me. I had no idea, before, what a grand thing it was to save souls."

"Yes, it is indeed a noble work, a work most pleasing to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I am glad my words have had such an effect on you."

"Yes, Father, and I have made up my mind to try to save at least one soul."

"One soul besides your own, I suppose you mean, don't you, Agnes?"

"Oh, of course, Father! But that is just the point: I believe that, if I can only send one soul to heaven, I shall be sure to get there myself."

"Indeed! and why so, Agnes?"

"Because I feel sure that the one I had saved would never rest satisfied until he knew that I was going to be saved, too. Suppose," and here Agnes looked at Father Murray with a smile, "suppose, Father, that I should happen to save you, wouldn't you do all you could to get me into heaven?"

Father Murray smiled in turn and thought to himself: "Just listen to the child using the *argumentum ad hominem* like an old philosopher."

"But wouldn't you, Father?" Agnes repeated.

"Wouldn't I what, child?"

"Wouldn't you do your best to get me into heaven if I saved you?"

"Of course I would, child. Why, I think I would even be ready to have a bout with St. Peter if he tried to keep you out. There! I couldn't say more than that, could I?" asked Father Murray, with a quizzical look on his face.

"No, indeed!" replied Agnes, laughing heartily. "Why, you said it in poetry!"

"In poetry? What do you mean, child?"

"Why, didn't you say:

> You'd be ready for a bout,
> If St. Peter kept me out—

Isn't that poetry?"

"You're a little rogue, Agnes."

It was something delightful to hear these two friends talking together. For friends they really were, in spite of the disparity of years. The philosopher tells us that friendship either finds people equal or makes them so. In the present case this necessary equality was brought about by the superior intelligence of

the little girl on the one hand, and by the special adaptability of the priest on the other.

"Seriously, then," resumed Father Murray, "you are quite correct in believing that gratitude would urge a person who had been saved to do everything in his power for his benefactor."

"That is what I thought, Father. And, besides, our divine Saviour will never allow Himself to be outdone in generosity. If I save a soul for Him, He will save mine for me if I ask Him, won't He, Father?"

"Certainly, child, certainly! Nothing could be clearer."

"Well, that is why I am so anxious to save a soul, and I have come to ask you how I am to do it. You are a priest and can easily save people, but how is a little girl like me to save anybody?"

"Easily enough! You can save others by means of prayer, especially if you pray in union with others. That is one of the purposes of the League of the Sacred Heart."

"Yes, Father, I know that. But you see if I pray along with others I shall never know when I have saved a soul all by myself, and that is just what I want to do."

"Oh, I understand what you mean now. You want to save somebody, and, at the same time, know that you have saved that particular person; is that it?"

"Yes, Father, that's it exactly. Then I would feel perfectly satisfied."

Father Murray reflected a few moments and then said:

"You see, child, the difficulty is to know when a person has actually been saved. Ah, now I have it! There is one way of accomplishing your desire."

"What is that?" asked Agnes, eagerly.

"It is to baptize a child in danger of death when there is not time to call the priest. Then, if the child dies, you are certain that you have sent a soul to heaven. But as such a case is not likely to occur, what I would advise you to do is to pray for the salvation of souls in general, and to ask God to let you know when any particular person has been saved by your prayers."

"But how will He let me know?"

"Don't trouble yourself about that, child. If God thinks it is good for you to know, He will have no difficulty in finding a way of making the matter clear to you."

"Thank you very much, Father. I will do what you say. Good-by."

"Good-by, Agnes, and God bless you!"

* * * * *

On her way home Agnes thought over what Father Murray had said, and resolved to say some prayers every day for the salvation of souls, and at the same time, to be on the lookout for an opportunity of baptizing a dying child.

So she began to take a great interest in babies, and soon became acquainted with all the infantile population of her part of town. She found out which of these tender blossoms of humanity had been christened, and which ones had not, and on these latter she kept a watchful eye until the grace of Baptism had made them children of God and heirs of heaven. The report that one of her infant protégés had fallen sick was sure to bring Agnes on a visit to the little sufferer, and she would listen with interest and sympathy to the mother's pathetic recital of her little darling's ailments.

One day she heard that a new family had moved into the neighborhood, and in passing by the place, she saw an Italian woman sitting on the front steps of the house with a child in her lap. And such a beautiful child! For all the world like one of those immortal cherubs that appear in contemplation above the arch in Raphael's incomparable Madonna di San Sisto.

The sight attracted Agnes at once.

"What a lovely baby!" she exclaimed to the woman.

The woman smiled, as what mother would not, and soon she and Agnes were talking together like old friends. The child, too, as if he divined the girl's admiration for him, stretched out his hands to her, and crowed with delight when she took him in her arms and petted him. She learned that the family were Catholics, and that the little child had not yet received baptism, though he was six months old.

"Oh, you ought to have him baptized!" Agnes said. "Suppose he should get suddenly ill and die—he could not go to heaven. Just think what a disappointment that would be for him; he could never play with the angels, and I'm sure they would like to play with him very much, he is such a beautiful child."

These simple words of the little girl sent a sudden pang to the heart of the mother, and made her realize how negligent she had been. She said she would speak to her husband about having the child christened, for "her little Pietro must not be kept from the angels if he should die."

The outcome of this little incident was that the child was baptized by Father Murray on the following Sunday, and Agnes, with her parents' consent, was one of the godparents.

After the ceremony Father Murray praised Agnes for what she had done, and said that, as she had been mainly instrumental in having the child's baptism attended to, she was likewise entitled to the greatest share of merit for the action. In fact, if the child should die before reaching the age of reason, she might in a manner say that she had saved a soul.

"But suppose he lives, as I hope he will, what then?" asked Agnes.

"In that case, as you know, you must see that he is brought up and instructed as a Catholic. You are now to some extent responsible for his salvation."

Somehow or other these words of Father Murray dampened the satisfaction she had hitherto felt in connection with this baptism. The thought of the new responsibility she had assumed began to weigh on her mind and she concluded to let babies alone in future.

"After all," she reflected, "it is better just to pray for the salvation of souls and to leave the rest to God."

One Sunday afternoon about a month later Father Murray was returning from a sick call. Evidently something had gone wrong with him, for he looked sad and troubled. A woman had called at the presbytery to tell him that a man lay dangerously

ill in a tenement house. He was a fallen-away Catholic, and had not asked for a priest, but she thought she had better let the priest know about him anyhow.

Father Murray thanked her for the trouble she had taken, and said he would attend to the case immediately.

When he reached the house he found a man about fifty years of age lying, pale and emaciated with sickness, on a wretched bed. As he entered the room he saw the sick man glance toward him and then quickly avert his eyes, as if the sight of a priest were disagreeable to him.

Father Murray approached the bed and spoke very kindly to the poor man, inquired about his sickness, and then asked if he were not a Catholic.

"No; I am nothing," was the brusk reply.

"But you were a Catholic once, were you not?"

"No matter what I was, I am nothing now. I don't believe in any religion."

Father Murray saw that he had a difficult case to deal with, and used all his prudence and tact in the endeavor to awaken in that perverted mind some spark of faith, some faint desire for the consolations of religion, but in vain: that stubborn heart remained obdurate.

"Don't bother me," the man said at length. "I didn't send for you, and I don't want you or any other priest or minister."

Then the good priest, seeing that his efforts were unavailing, reluctantly left the house. And that is why he looked so sad and downcast as he walked homeward. He had done his utmost to convert that poor, misguided sinner and had failed. Was there anything else he could do? Any expedient he might have recourse to?

As he approached the church, Sunday-school was just over, and the children were coming out of the vestibule. Usually he had a smile and a pleasant word for them whenever he met them; but to-day he was so absorbed in thought that he hardly noticed them.

He was aroused from his abstraction by the sound of a sweet,

familiar voice, exclaiming, "Good evening, Father Murray!" and there stood little Agnes Raleigh looking up at him with a smile.

At sight of her one of those sudden inspirations which are sometimes experienced by those who labor in the sacred ministry, came into his mind. Here was the solution of his problem. God would grant the conversion of that hardened sinner to the prayers of this innocent child. For more than a month she had been praying for the fulfilment of her heart's desire, the salvation of a soul. He felt a conviction that God was now about to hear her.

"Agnes," he said, "I want you to go into the church and say some prayers for the conversion of a sinner who is dangerously ill. He is a poor, fallen-away Catholic, and lives not far from your house. Ask our divine Saviour to grant him the grace of a sincere repentance."

"Certainly I will, Father," said Agnes, as she went toward the church.

Father Murray stood looking after her for a moment or two, and then walked toward the presbytery. All trace of sadness had vanished from his countenance, and as he entered the house he said to himself: "That man will not die without the sacraments."

* * * * *

Agnes did not think it strange that she should be asked to pray for the conversion of a sinner. Every first Friday she was wont to hear Father Murray read out a list of requests for prayers to obtain conversions, happy deaths, and similar favors. So the incident made no special impression on her. She entered the church, recited some prayers for the Father's intention, and then returned home. She found her father and mother awaiting her in the parlor.

"Agnes," said her mother, "I was telling your father about a new hymn which the children sang at their Mass this morning. I thought it very beautiful. What was the name of it?"

"You mean the one that begins, 'Hark, hark, my soul'?"

"Yes," said her mother, "that is the one."

"That is one of Father Faber's hymns. It is called 'Pilgrims of the Night.' I think it is lovely. I wish we had the music."

"We must get it. Do you know the name of the composer? There may be several musical settings of the same words."

"Yes; the one we sing is by Richardson."

"By the way, that reminds me!" said Mr. Raleigh. "I bought some music yesterday, and the clerk gave me an English Hymn-book to look over. Perhaps it is the same one that your organist has. Run upstairs to my room, Agnes, and bring down a package you will find on the bureau."

Agnes brought the package, and when her father opened it and examined the hymn-book, he found that it contained the words and music of the hymn they were speaking about. Mrs. Raleigh was delighted.

"Now, Agnes," she said, "you must sing the hymn for papa to show him how beautiful it is. I will play the accompaniment for you."

"Very well, mamma, but I only know three verses."

"That will be quite sufficient. Now, listen and see how you like it," said Mrs. Raleigh to her husband as she went to the piano.

It was a warm day in June. All the windows were open to admit the fresh air.

"Hark, hark, my soul, angelic strains are swelling
O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore;
How sweet the truth those blessed strains are telling
Of that new life where sin shall be no more.
Angels of Jesus, angels of light,
Singing to welcome the pilgrims of the night."

Thus sang Agnes in a clear, sweet voice. At first she sang as children usually do, without any attempt at expression, but, as she proceeded with the hymn, the words and melody seemed to awaken the slumbering emotions of her heart, and then her voice,

responsive to the feeling, grew in pathos and power till it thrilled her listening parents with its vibrant tones.

At the conclusion of the hymn, when Mrs. Raleigh, astonished and delighted, turned to congratulate her daughter, she suddenly paused and exclaimed:

"Why, Agnes, I declare your eyes are filled with tears! What is the matter, darling?"

"I don't know, mamma. A strange feeling came over me while I was singing. The words of the hymn seemed so real to me that I could almost imagine I saw the angels and heard their singing. They seemed to be pleading for the poor dying sinner for whom Father Murray asked me to pray."

"What person was that?" asked her father.

"I don't know; some person that Father Murray said was dangerously ill and needed the grace of conversion. Perhaps I did not pray enough for the poor man. I think I will go upstairs and say some more prayers for him."

"Very well, Agnes, you may go," said her mother.

As soon as she had left the room her mother said: "What a sensitive child Agnes is becoming."

"Yes," said Mr. Raleigh, "I am afraid she is becoming too sensitive. I hope she is not going to have an attack of sickness. It is not natural for a girl of her age to be so affected by the words of a song, or by the thought of a dying person whom she has never seen. I was watching her while she was singing, and her face glowed like one inspired. I have never heard her sing like that before; her voice actually thrilled me."

"So it did me," said his wife. "It was most remarkable."

"Let me see that hymn. What a beautiful writer Father Faber was. I have heard it said that he would have been Poet Laureate of England if he had not become a Catholic. I have often thought that one of the greatest triumphs of the Church in this century was the conversion of that illustrious trio, Newman, Manning, and Faber."

"In what way?" asked his wife.

"By showing that the Catholic Church can captivate all that is

noblest in man, even in its very highest development. By her truth she won the brilliant intellect of Newman; by her goodness, the indomitable will of Manning, and by her beauty the tender heart of Faber."

* * * * *

The state of mind in which a person finds himself after rejecting the proffered grace of God is a most wretched one. This the dying sinner who had refused the ministrations of Father Murray found to his cost. For a time he sought to shelter himself from the attacks of conscience behind the barrier of skepticism, but soon this flimsy structure crumbled to ruins beneath the repeated assaults of the truths recalled to his mind by Father Murray, and he found himself face to face with his accusing conscience.

What had he done? He, a born Catholic, had refused the assistance of a priest at the hour of death. What did that mean? There was no disguising the truth; it meant that he had deliberately refused the means of salvation. Next the tempter's voice was heard: "Well, you have done it. It is too late now. Too late! too late!" Then despair assailed his heart, while thoughts of the awful punishments that awaited him tortured his mind until the poor wretch writhed in agony.

Suddenly, through the open window, came the sound of a child's voice singing a hymn. So clearly did the sweet young voice sound in the stillness of that Sunday afternoon that every word was distinctly audible. He listened with feverish attention in order to distract his mind from the horrible thoughts that were assailing him. He found there was something soothing, too, in the very sound of the innocent child's voice. Ah! but that was not all, for presently he recognized the hymn. It was one of those he used to sing when he was an innocent child himself,—a choir-boy in far-off England. In a moment his imagination carried him back to that happy time. He was again singing in the choir. Before him rose the graceful arches of the old Gothic church. There stood the kind old priest at the familiar altar; there knelt his mother in her pew below.

"Angels of Jesus, angels of light,
Singing to welcome the pilgrims of the night."

In those days he was half an angel himself; but would the angels sing to welcome him now? O God, how he had changed! Tears came into his eyes and his heart melted with grief at the thought. But, hark! the next verse is being sung:

"Onward we go, for still we hear them singing,
'Come, weary souls, for Jesus bids you come;'
And through the dark, its echoes sweetly ringing,
The music of the Gospel leads us home."

"Jesus bids me come," he said, "it is not too late. There is still hope. O Jesus, have mercy! Bid me come to Thee!"

"Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea.
And laden souls, by thousands meekly stealing,
Kind Shepherd, turn their weary steps to Thee."

The voice of Agnes, sweet and vibrant as a bell at evening pealing, seemed to the dying sinner like the voice of the Good Shepherd Himself calling him back to the true fold.

"I come, O Saviour, I come!" he cried.

Just then the woman who had been charitably taking care of him during his illness, entered the room.

"Woman," he said, "for the love of God get the priest for me. I want to make my peace before I die."

The good woman was overjoyed to hear these words, and lost no time in telling Father Murray of the sick man's request. Soon the zealous priest was again at the bedside, and had the consolation of administering to him the last sacraments. Then, to his surprise, he learned that the immediate cause of the sinner's conversion was the singing of a hymn by some child in the neighborhood. Of course he at once thought of Agnes and asked the woman in attendance if she had heard the singing and knew who the child was.

"Indeed, then, Your Reverence, I did hear the singing. Sure

it was Mr. Raleigh's little girl that sang the hymn, and a sweet voice the child has, God bless her!"

"I thought as much," said Father Murray. "Now Mrs. Murphy, I wish you would go and bring Agnes here. Tell her parents that I want to see her for a very particular reason."

"Certainly I will, Your Reverence."

When Agnes arrived, Father Murray led her to the dying man's bedside and said:

"Here is the little girl who sang the hymn that made such an impression on you. I thought you would like to see her."

"May God bless you, child!" the poor man said, as he took her hand and pressed it to his lips. "To you I owe the great blessing of being reconciled to God."

Agnes, who knew nothing of what had occurred, stood there quite bewildered. Father Murray hastened to explain matters to her.

"This is the person for whom I asked you to pray. I wanted you to learn from his own lips that God in His mercy had heard your prayers. Now run home and tell papa and mamma that I shall call to see them on my way back."

Father Murray then gave his whole attention to the sick man, who had begun to fail rapidly. He recited the prayers of the dying for him, and remained by his bedside encouraging and consoling him until he peacefully breathed his last. Then, full of consolation and marveling at the ways of divine providence, he went to visit the Raleighs.

He found them eagerly awaiting his coming and anxious to know what had really occurred, for the meager account of Agnes had served only to puzzle them. He related the full particulars of the conversion and then said:

"I feel quite certain that the man died truly penitent, and I have no doubt that he is saved. So you see, Agnes, that God found out a way of letting you know that your prayers had been heard."

"Yes, Father," said Agnes. "His ways are indeed wonderful. I feel so thankful to Him for granting me the favor of saving a soul."

"Father Murray," here Mr. Raleigh exclaimed, "I have been thinking over what has occurred, and on reflection I don't think that Agnes deserves all the credit of this conversion. It seems to me that I ought to have a share because I brought home the book containing the hymn which so affected the dying sinner."

"And I," said Mrs. Raleigh, "claim a share, too, because I was the one who first thought of the hymn and asked Agnes to sing it."

"Well, for the matter of that," said Father Murray, "I can lay claim to a goodly share also. And there is Father Faber who wrote the hymn: he is certainly entitled to a share. I'm afraid, Agnes, there will be very little merit left for you."

But Agnes only smiled. She felt that God had heard her prayers, and her heart was filled with sweet consolation.

A LITTLE ROMANCE IN AVILA.

BY ANNA BLANCHE McGILL.

I.

THEY were drinking afternoon tea with an American woman in her cozy apartment in Paris—the friend with whom Katherine was stopping. Though there were not other callers enough to make a crowd, they had strayed into the library. It was the first time they had seen each other for eight months—the first time since Katherine sailed for Europe.

"So you've done England, Italy, and Germany anew this time, Egypt and the Holy Lands, Spain, now Paris again, and then what?" asked Howard Robertson, laughingly.

"Oh, of course, you can't conceive of my remaining in one place permanently," said Katherine.

"Well, scarcely. The American tourists abroad so seldom do, you know. A kind of locomotor ataxia seems to take possession of them as soon as they put foot on the dry land of this side."

"Particularly the feminine variety of tourists, I suppose you would like to add. Well, I can't challenge the charge. However, my next move may set a new precedent. I'm going back to Spain to remain—indefinitely—"

"To Spain? Indefinitely?" repeated Howard, and a shade crossed the face whose calm brow and well-cut chin usually maintained a strong repose. He sat silent a moment. And then: "I had hoped," he continued, "I had hoped you might be ready for America again! No use beating around the bush—you know why I came over. I wanted to speak before you sailed, but I could

see, despite your amiable way, that you did not wish it. I must speak now. I came to do it, I can't be silent any longer."

Katherine Easton sat there, so beautiful a woman in front of the log fire, its light throwing her face and figure into warm relief, that one could scarcely marvel that a man had crossed the Atlantic for her.

"I'm sorry you came," she began. "Yes; I know what you want to say, and I hate to be ungracious after your coming so far. Had I known, I should have prevented it. But there's no help. I tried to make things go otherwise but I can't—I'm going to be frank with you—"

"Ah, you needn't. I might have known you did not care. It's my fate—"

"Don't be like that, Howard. Be patient. I don't want you to grow angry with me. Your friendship has always been one of the keenest pleasures of my life. I don't want any rift in that at parting—"

"At parting?"

"Yes, at parting. Here's the truth. You know I have become a Catholic. I was baptized in Rome—"

"As if that made any difference to me—"

"Oh, doesn't it? Well, I am glad you don't take it so tragically as some of our friends do. But that isn't all. Howard—of course I can't expect you to understand—I scarcely know how to tell you. But the fact is, everything has changed. Life has come to seem so different to me now. You know the old one never satisfied—I went through the forms, lived like all the other women in society, but you know that only my real friendships and a very few dear friends counted."

"Yes. You used to wear a kind of gracious mask—we've often laughed about it. We both hated most of the functions—you know how we gently scoffed at most of the people. But what's that to do with us now, Katherine?"

"Well, it is simply this: the old life always seemed utterly futile. I could never find a refuge in it. I couldn't take my art seriously—I have not genius enough to be as selfishly devoted as

it demands. I did not really care enough for it, to tell the truth. I was always feeling the need of some supreme demand on my interest and endeavor. Everything has cleared now—I wish you knew something of the organization of the Catholic Church, so you could understand me better. It's a great community of workers, one doing this, one that, and I have found in it what I wanted. I never knew just what to do with myself. I'm going to unite with some who can help, who have a definite system—simple but definite, devoting energy where positively it can not be misdirected."

"What do you mean? I don't catch your drift."

"Well, Howard, I mean I am going into a convent."

"A convent? You! Katherine? Impossible!" He rose from his chair and strode over to her.

"Sit down, don't get excited, don't look as though I had lost my senses. It is not so bad as you think. I'm not 'immuring' myself; I'm not the 'victim of priestly tyranny.' In cold, deliberate conviction I am going to devote myself to the truth I have found in the Church, and the cloister seems to me the best place to do so."

"Oh, Katherine, this is inconceivable. What can have taken possession of you? Not that I believe nunneries are hotbeds of iniquity. I know enough Stoic philosophy to apprehend the ascetic life—but for you! Why, it's incredible—it would be an outrage! A woman of your quality lost to the world? Ridiculous! There's where your mission or vocation is—you can't get rid of your birth, your position. You are meant to grace society, your beauty, charm—"

"Retro me Sathano! I shall have to send you away, if you talk like that."

"Oh, Katherine, it is pure folly! You are too sensible and intelligent not to read yourself aright. Besides it is a physical impossibility. How can you stand such a life as they lead after what you have lived—it is positively suicidal—"

"No; I think I shall be able for it. Besides—"

"Oh, what has taken possession of you? What shall I do?"

"Don't be weak, Howard. I have respected and admired you too much to see you this way at the last. Believe that I tried to avert this. Come, let us say good-by, this is all. You must go now. Marry some good, sweet woman who deserves you—I shall pray for it sometimes."

II.

It was the hour for recreation in the convent of St. Joseph. Out in the beautiful grounds that overlooked the city Avila, and its surrounding desert, groups of nuns strolled or sat in the shade. Autumn was passing over the land. The trees waved in harmonies of gold and red and brown. Over the dry grass, grown sere, and the sandy pebbled walks, the leaves piled themselves in crisp rugs of yellow, crimson, dark green and bronze, surpassing the glories of Turkish weaving. The nuns, wandering here and there in their brown Carmelite habits, seemed so many incarnations of the grave spirit of Autumn.

On a bench beside a certain path a Sister was reading her Office. Down the walk a young novice was wheeling an invalid's chair and its occupant. As they approached, the elder woman addressed the younger:

"Agnes, suppose you go join Sister Marie de Jesu and the novices and see what they are laughing about so heartily. Leave Sister Katherine with me a while here in the shade. I'll see she does not get out of the chair and slip away." The young woman rolled the chair on the grass and in front of the bench, and went to join the novices.

The two women she left behind her were a strong contrast to each other. The elder was about forty-five years old; the habit did not conceal her vigorous physique; her complexion and great brown eyes were full of life and healthy brightness. The other, nearly twenty years younger, sitting with a certain grace and dignity among her pillows, despite her pallor and emaciation, retained vestiges of a fine frame. Her eyes were clear blue; the

delicacy in her face was its keynote, where strength was that of the other.

"How are you feeling, child?" the elder woman asked.

"A little better, I believe, thank you, mother."

"Only a little better, I fear. Well, never mind, you will soon come back well and strong again."

"I surely hope so—but indeed, I am disgusted with myself for having been so much trouble. It seems so weak, so ignominious to become so exhausted twice in succession. I thought I was perfectly well when I came back after the first illness, and here I am worse off than I was the first time—it's very pusillanimous, indeed."

"I fear you young Americans have not the physical stamina we Spanish have, despite the fact that your critics think us decadent."

"We have to become acclimated, undoubtedly. I thought I had achieved that. It has been two years since I first came, you know. Your cold weather is no more rigorous than our New York or Boston winters. But this heat is more oppressive."

"You think it is not—I speak hesitatingly, child—the severity of our rules? Did you ever think of any other Order? You know the Lord wishes sacrifices, but He would not tax us beyond our strength."

"Oh, mother, do not speak that way. I shall be able for the test—I can not think of anything else! Besides, what would St. Teresa think of me if I deserted her convent?" she said, laughingly. "You know I owe all to her. Her life, her books, put the final touch to my conversion, and it would not do to fail in her cloister."

"I did not know you read her when you were a little Protestant."

"Oh, yes. You know St. Francis and St. Teresa have quite a cult among 'fine spirits' beyond the pale. They came into my hands—oh, well, actually with Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Emerson, and other literary philosophers whose ethics are largely the criteria for agnostic modern life. St. Teresa's 'Way of Perfection'

was my sesame, and this little Avila town of hers my destination, long dreamed of from the time I left America—first as a place of pilgrimage, secondly, as the place of my vocation. You mustn't suggest my desertion—it would break my heart. Do pray that I shall soon be strong enough to return."

"Well, child, I hope you may."

* * * * *

Few of the nuns thought she could ever recover when Katherine was taken away from the convent the second time to build up her strength, which the old doctor of the convent and two of the best in the town agreed she could not regain at that season of the year in Avila, and certainly not if she continued trying to follow the rules of the Order. In a confidential conversation with one of the older nuns, Mother Anne of the Incarnation expressed a doubt of her ever becoming accustomed to the severity of the discipline. For, as she said, Katherine's life had been spent in comfort, almost luxury, and though ordinarily a comparatively well woman, she was by no means inured to such a mode of life as the Carmelites followed—it was too radical a change for some constitutions, and though none could doubt her zeal and fidelity, an actual physical limitation seemed to have her in its fetters.

However, in six months she was back in the novitiate, the roses appearing again in her cheeks, and though Mother Anne tried to restrain her, she immediately went about her duties as punctiliously as anybody.

But the following winter was mercilessly severe; an inclement spring followed, and once again the poor girl succumbed. Being her third trial, she fought most strenuously against the prostration —all too strenuously, as the very nervous effort was a strain that merely hastened her utter breakdown. Soon she was unable to leave her bed. And at last when life hung by a thread the chaplain went to her and told her that if she remained there the nuns could scarcely care for her as she needed. The climate was such a hindrance to her recovery that she could not live. If she were borne immediately to the south of France, health might possibly be restored to her. She begged to be allowed to stay and die—

there was a poignant pathos in the way she pleaded. The gentle old padre finally brought her to a childish submission. She was really too weak to resist whatever they chose to do with her, but there was evidence the day she left of a dull pain that, together with her frail, debilitated condition, made the nuns feel depressed as by a death—more so in fact, for death is always beautiful in a convent, but this departure was all pitiful.

III.

A year passed, and Katherine slowly regained a little strength. From the quiet village in the south of France she had drifted back, irresistibly as a bird to the nest, to Avila.

All her physicians had emphatically decided that she could not endure the severe routine of the cloister. To some intimates she deprecated with vehemence the luxurious existence her Vere de Vere ancestors had lived, which now incapacitated their scion for the ascetic life. Only regard for the nuns and the persuasion of her confessor prevented her striving once more to enter.

Other convents did not appeal to her. She felt no vocation at all to them. By nature an extremist, it must be the most retired life, or one in the midst of the struggling, suffering world. No *via media* attracted her. She recognized the beauty and use of other communities, but they would not, she feared, satisfy her. As things stood, she reconciled herself to the new conditions, and with a heroic energy of will, she determined to take up her life and make it a good, efficient one, devoted in service according to her endowments. And in Avila, at least, she could remain. With a sentiment worthy of the Latins around her, she resolved that Avila, the birthplace of Teresa, her patron, her guide, should also be her home. That much honor to St. Teresa, whose cloister was denied her, she might at least give. If the climate grew too severe during a few months of the year, she could leave and return at will.

Gradually, when the edge began to wear off the disappointment of her first plans and hopes, her life grew to be a sweet, beautiful

one. She went to early Mass in the morning in the old Cathedral. Kneeling there beneath its great Gothic arches, in the quiet light that came through the gloriously-toned windows, she found a rare peace and a beauty that made a deep and gratifying impression, spiritualizing her sensitive imagination. The rest of the day went in visits to the poor and sick, and other pious offices directed by her confessor. When any time remained, it was filled with books and thinking, as the old life at its best used to be. She did not isolate herself from people. Now that she had returned to the world her nature was too rich and affluent to be confined in itself. Even in the cloister she had been an influence—being one of those charming individualities Tennyson typed once and for all as "a central warmth diffusing bliss." She had a few old friends in Avila whom she saw as often as the duties she had assigned herself permitted.

One Sunday afternoon, as she was sitting alone in her little apartment in one of the quaint, narrow streets where she lived with one servant, the maid brought in a card. Now though a few of the men whom she had known before in Avila and whom she had been meeting through her friends, occasionally dropped in to see her, somehow when she read Howard Robertson's name on the card the maid handed her, a shadow of regret passed over her. As there was no real cause for her not seeing him, she shook off the feeling as a morbid agitation, and was able to greet him with old-time cordiality when he came in.

After a man has proposed to a woman and been rejected, it is something of an ordeal for them to meet again. However, in this case they were both too finely made to let such a thing be apparent. Besides they had so much to talk of aside from personalities of an intimate nature that conversation was not hopelessly difficult. For such a number of years Katherine had been away from America she had many questions to ask. Robertson's aplomb stood him well in hand; his poise was charming—a rejected suitor was the last character one would have ascribed to him.

Finally, generalities and their mutual friends were exhausted topics.

"Come, let us talk of ourselves now," said Howard. "You have been ill, I hear."

"Yes; I have been ill, ignominiously ill, but I am well again now, I trust."

"Ignominiously ill! That's too bad." After a moment's silence he continued: "Were I ungracious I might claim the virtue of prophecy—I was afraid you could not stand it."

"I must admit you were something of an augur—I seem to have failed. But tell me of yourself. You have been well?"

"Yes, recently. I had a several months' spell of nervous prostration, but now 'Richard is himself.' You possibly did not hear of it. I wonder if you heard something else about me?"

Katherine felt guilty. Her aunt had written her fully, with covert reproaches, of his illness, which gossips readily ascribed to his distress and worry at Katherine's going to the convent.

"No. What else about you?" she asked.

"I thought you had not heard. I came by Italy on my way here. In Rome I was baptized a Catholic."

An expression of keen joy and surprise passed over Katherine's face. What a pleasure it would have been to Robertson to have conjured such an expression a few years previous! She barely had time to answer before the maid brought in another card—that of Don Alonzo de Cepeda. This time a shade passed over Howard Robertson's face.

"A Catholic? Oh, Howard, I am so glad. I thought you would come to it."

"Yes, that is about what I did. I read and thought myself to it. Three years ago, you know, I was agnostic—had read myself away from old moorings. There was only one way then—to read back to safety."

Katherine was glad he put it that way, especially in the few moments that elapsed before the Señor Cepeda's entrance.

The two men were an interesting contrast. They were two distinct and characteristic examples of two distinct nationalities, yet each the representative of a similar class, each the product of culture, good birth, good form—the American gentleman, the

Spanish señor. The one, tall, broad-shouldered—dark hair, keen blue-gray eyes, features well-cut by birth and energy of mind; the other not so tall, not quite so muscular and broad, by no means effeminate; his dark eyes repeated the black of his hair. Pure Spanish, he might have been one of those gentlemen Velasquez loved to paint, stepped forth from some hereditary old gold frame of Avila.

"Mr. Robertson is an old friend, Señor Cepeda, from America. We are great travelers, you see."

"Si, señorita. One can not blame the men of America for following the lead of her charming women."

"What a graceful Latin you are, señor!"

"I shall not let Señor Cepeda fancy we are to be outdone in amiable compliment, Miss Easton," said Howard. "I can not blame our charming women for seeking so charming a town as Avila. It is a most fascinating little place. Ancient, and fraught with as interesting a history as any town in Spain, I suppose."

"Well, yes. Our old wall, with its crowning breastworks, is one of the most ancient in Europe. One of the earliest Christian churches is here."

"You are winning Mr. Robertson. He is one of the few antiquarians extant in this novelty-seeking age."

"So? Then he will find much to interest him. Have you seen the little stone pigs in some of the old courtyards? They are supposed to have been idols of the aborigines—they are our links to I know not what immemorial antiquity."

"And your old houses and streets, quaint and tortuous as we dreamed when reading your old romances! I wonder Avila is not more sought by other travelers—the tomb of Prince Juan in San Tomas, if nothing else, ought to interest us Americans, as the unhappy youth was, I believe, Isabella's son, and those rare pictures of Berreguente and Borgoña. I must put the Americans on their track, Miss Easton, when I return."

"So you will not stay with us, Señor Robertson? We are hospitable and like to detain the few travelers that come."

"No; my stay is to be short, for however fascinating your old

world of romance, legend, and history is, America is my home, you see."

And so the talk drifted amiably from Avila to America and back again, and at last Robertson rose to leave.

As he went down the narrow street of old houses, nearly all bearing armorial door-plates, he said under his breath: "A plague on this affable Señor de 'Centipeda'! Why did he have to appear on the scene? Why did he have to intrude the first time I saw her after all these years?" And so he went mumbling in his heart after the selfish fashion of men who are ever inconsistently astounded and chagrined that another man finds a charming woman charming.

Meantime Cepeda was saying to Katherine: "An old friend of Miss Easton's—how fortunate for the señor!"

"Yes, and for the señorita," laughed Katherine. "We were almost children together." Then she dwelt a little on the subject, telling how Mr. Robertson was also a recent convert.

An hour passed in pleasant conversation. Cepeda was a treasury of local history, and furthermore, a product of much continental and individual culture, so there was usually no flag in their conversation. At last he, too, took his leave.

As he went down the narrow street, he said to himself: "This Robertson—an amiable gentlehombre, and good-looking—but why comes he here? Ha, I can not blame him, he comes for señorita. He is a fool who does not see it! I wonder—no, no, she will not marry! The poor people to whom she goes are right in naming her 'la hermana Catalina'—she has indeed the heart of a nun beneath that charming manner."

Meantime Katherine's mind was not in a cloistral serenity. Robertson's coming could have only one reason, and it needed no egotism on her part to see that. And she was distressed by it to the heart's core—there could be but a repetition of a former occasion. Though she had no intention, now that she was in the world again, of leading a narrow, isolated life, cloistered as it were, by a manner that would repel people, she felt pretty sure she would never marry. She had no vows, it is true, but her

dedication to her pious work was absorbing and precluded thought of such a thing.

As she was thinking, the figure of de Cepeda unconsciously came to her mind. She fell to thinking how respectful he had always been. Whenever, in the last several months, he had called on her, he always bore himself with such a dignified reserve—an attitude most gratifying. There was a kind of homage in the reserve actually more flattering than the adulation other men once had offered. She could not help feeling he somehow understood her wishes, and was willing to respect them. His coming there was but a gradual and inevitable result of their meeting frequently at the home of his sister, one of Katherine's oldest friends. When his sister went over to Paris then for several months, it was but a bare civility that he occasionally looked in to see how she was, to offer some courtesy. Never letting his compliments offend, never intruding, always lending a charming sympathy, Cepeda was a man to be friends with. And first and foremost, he and his sister were faithful Catholics, and Katherine's disposition, cut off as she was from her old friends, was to cling to those children of her new Mother with a kind of reverence, as for natural heirs of a great legacy she had recently come to share.

Then her thought passed back to Howard, and she prayed to be spared having to hurt him. She was really too fond of him, she too highly esteemed his fine character and temperament, to be indifferent to his happiness. And now that he had become a Catholic—though she knew he was too honest and truth-loving, too courageously independent to give his allegiance where it was not sincere for any reason whatsoever besides conviction—still she felt responsible in some way for him, and it made her tenderness toward him deeper and more considerate than it might otherwise have been.

She was saved an immediate ordeal. The weeks passed, and Howard maintained a respectful, unobtrusive silence. He stopped in to see her once or twice a week, or took her driving. He made a trip or so to Segovia, La Granja, and other neighboring places, always returning to Avila. He said he was doing some historical

and archeological study. There was certainly material enough, and he might partly be credited, as such study was avowedly his penchant. He was amiable, conversational, never making allusions to the last meeting, none to her noviceship—he was generally nothing but the good friend.

Though it pleased and relieved Katherine to some extent, she could not understand it. Nor was she the only one he mystified. His presence in the town was inevitably the source of some comment. Katherine thought his usual delicacy might have spared her this. She sometimes wished he would speak and have it over. Yet sometimes of late she was beginning to think her judgment of what brought him was erroneous and egotistic. He preserved such an exceedingly calm, non-committal exterior. But one person, at least, had no doubts as to what had lured him to Avila and what held him there. Nearly every time Don Alonzo de Cepeda called on Katherine of late there was Howard, or he would shortly afterward drop in. And this was just the reason each was silent about something each had in his heart.

* * * * *

The fifteenth of October in Avila is a golden day—the feast of St. Teresa, the town's patron, as well as Katherine's. Katherine looked forward with especial interest to this great, perhaps greatest day in Avila's year. It was the annual custom to honor the saint with a procession. In previous years in Avila, Katherine's illness had prevented her seeing the pageant, so she was eager for this one. It was the custom of the devout to follow the procession to the church. Katherine did not feel equal to this. Robertson had heard of it; he asked Katherine to go with him to the Plaza to watch it. She consented, joking with him as to the "change of heart" in both; how surprised they would have been several years ago had they foreseen themselves regarding with reverence anything so "medieval" as a procession in a saint's honor.

"It will be very impressive—at least if I can take the word of my old innkeeper," said Howard. "We shall get to see royalty, too. First will come the representatives of noble houses, then the relic borne by the clergy, then more nobility bearing banners em-

bossed with the arms of their houses, then the populace, the bourgeois. My eyes are prepared, you see, for 'all the wonder that will be.' I hear that the banner preceding the relic is always borne by some lateral descendant of St. Teresa's."

In the distance voices were at last heard chanting St. Teresa's hymn:

"Aguesto divino union
Del Amor con que yo vivo,
Haze á Dios ser mi cautivo
Y libre mi caraçón."*

It was a magnificent spectacle! The warm, mellow October sun lighted up the armorial banners and the rich vestments of the nobility, whom Katherine and Howard watched with wonder and edification.

The whole plaza rang with chanting. The priests and the canopy over the relic were in sight. The last banner approached —it was the most gorgeous of all.

"Look," said Robertson, suddenly, "there's your Señor de Cepeda carrying that banner. Isn't it handsome?"

"Yes—the best of all. It is the last, too."

"Why, then, he must be a relative of St. Teresa's. My old hostler said one of them always carried the banner just before the relic. It is a great honor, I am told."

As the relic was borne under the canopy carried by four young priests in beautiful vestments, the people, the men with bared heads, the women and children took up the chant—the whole plaza was one great hosanna to the saint whose birth had been granted to Avila, and whose life had there been spent in service to the Most High. When the last of the pageant had passed and the crowd thinned, Katherine and Howard drove around to the Cathedral to Mass. The sanctuary they had never seen so impressive. In front of the sanctuary knelt the bearers of the banners, ex-

*"This union of divinest love,
By which I live a life above,
Setting my heart at liberty
My God to me enchains."

tending the grandeur of the scene quite a distance down in the church. In the middle of the semicircle inside the sanctuary knelt the Señor Cepeda. Howard pointed him out to Katherine, which was unnecessary. She had already observed him, and she was wondering if what Howard had said were so, if he were really a lateral descendant of the patron she had tried to follow in vain into the cloister, but who was still her advocate in the celestial court. She was somewhat distracted. Her glance frequently returned to Cepeda. As he knelt there under the banner, with in truth the device of the Carmelites, a mountain topped by three stars, a crown whence issues an arm grasping a sword, and beneath this what was probably the arms of the Cepeda family, his head was bent in reverence yet with dignity, with such a noble expression of devotion that she almost fancied a resemblance to her picture of St. Teresa which she had never before noticed.

It was late when they left church, so Howard proposed taking luncheon there at some Posada, and then driving into the country. Katherine was a little tired, and as she had planned nothing for the afternoon, she consented.

The country was charming; they drove through old, long avenues of elm, oak, holm-beech, past interesting, venerable estates hedged with clipped box and yew. But early in the drive Howard had divulged the fact that he was thinking of returning soon to America. It spoiled the drive for Katherine. She did not feel equal to going through what she knew was Howard's design in bringing her out that afternoon. So it was one continual fencing to ward off what she preferred settling finally some other time.

It was true Howard had become a little more to her life, since they had been the last several months the only Americans in Avila. It had made her depend a little on him—for this experience of being absolutely alone was something novel to her—as her uncle's ward in America she had always been surrounded by a large and devoted family. So though she was sure she did not at present feel a call to marry Howard, circumstances seemed to have thrown him just that much nearer to her as to make it hard to say the word now which would surely disrupt their friendship.

Howard had never known her as she was this afternoon—a little petulant, almost contradictory occasionally. Her whole demeanor put a check on his tongue, so that at the end of the drive both were in a ridiculously petulant mood for people of their age and usual social poise. At parting, Katherine redeemed herself by a little amiability and a cordial invitation to call soon.

"To-morrow evening may I come?"

"Yes; to-morrow if you wish."

* * * * *

Katherine was too exhausted by her drive to dress for dinner, which she was to have alone, anyhow—she barely rearranged her hair. She had scarcely finished the solitary repast when she was startled by the maid's announcing, in response to the bell's summons, that El Señor de Cepeda wished to see la Señorita. She went in to him straightway, not waiting to dress again; the color in her cheeks, from the afternoon in the air and sun, needed no charm of costume to make her attractive.

"Buen' dia', señor," she said, smilingly, as she entered the room.

"Buen' dia', señorita—it is good to see you smile—for you will perhaps then pardon my coming so informally, without soliciting the honor."

"Certainly, señor. I am always glad to see my friends."

"But I wished particularly to see you this evening, and I ventured to trust you would see me."

Katherine actually was wondering what had brought him so informally—he had never called save on her day at home without an engagement.

"Yes; I have been driving this afternoon, so decided to remain in this evening. By the way, can you tell me, señor, whose estate lies to the right as you drive out of town?"

Señor Cepeda was always interesting when he spoke at length of the interesting history of Avila. As Katherine listened while he began running over the names of neighboring places and their owners, she was studying him. She began wondering if what

Howard had told her was true—that the descendants of St. Teresa always carried the last banner in the procession, and that therefore Cepeda was a kinsman of her dear patron. She studied his face attentively—it might be so, she thought. There was the same high brow, fine, strong, dark eyes, the thin lips, firm, but with much sweetness and amiability. It was no fancy that suggested a resemblance. Howard's face came before her mind in contrast —not, she confessed, to his advantage—perhaps it was because she knew him better, she knew more of his expressions—he sometimes had a certain boyishness that she thought of in comparison with the Don's dignity which savored indeed of the court. The Cepedas were of noble family. She hated to admit that there was a fine repose—a superciliousness, almost, about his manner, that she was inclined to approve—Americans' lives were too strenuous not to leave marks—her mental comparisons were getting odious and confusing—

"And just beyond the Ahumada lies a little estate I have the pleasure of owning—"

"Oh, yes; I remember, I believe. The house beyond the long beech grove, with quaint parterres of roses and the dear little lagrimas de Jesu, I believe you call them?"

"Yes; that is it; I am glad you like it. I usually spend my summer there—but now may I take the liberty of telling what brought me here to-night? I have wanted to speak to you upon a subject that has been in my heart some time. Because of a circumstance I need not tell the lips have been faint at speaking what the heart desired. To-day they are not much braver—only a little. May they speak?"

Katherine knew not what to think of herself—she was completely unnerved, but this time not disagreeably. She was surprised, and somehow she could be nothing but submissive.

"Yes, I will listen," she said, quietly.

"You are kind, señorita—then let me say it all. You know to-day is St. Teresa's day—"

"Yes, I saw you at the celebration."

"Then you know it was my privilege to bear her banner—I

have never told you, I believe, that I have the privilege of being her unworthy kinsman. One of the pious beliefs in Avila is that whoever bears that banner with a pure heart may make a request of St. Teresa which she can not refuse. Other years, seven years, have I carried that banner, always making my intention for spiritual graces. Only this year have I made one that some might deem worldly. I do not think it is—but St. Teresa *alone* can not grant it."

"I hope not because it really is too worldly, Señor Cepeda. You should have chastened temptation from your spirit—"

"No, señorita, but because it is to be had from this dear, wicked old world, and St. Teresa means that some one in it must help me—I prayed, señorita, that I might hereafter have the honor of caring for, of serving you with my love—I know your devotion to St. Teresa. May I beg a little of it for her unworthy kinsman? Don't let me presume, don't let me intrude on your life—if you do not wish it send me away. But I shall think you still and always—"

"Go away now, señor, but come to-morrow evening, will you? And let me tell you then—if I can help St. Teresa—you have surprised me—I did not dream this—I must ask her to direct me."

* * * * *

And when he had left her alone, she sat late into the night holding counsel with St. Teresa, with herself, especially with that subconscious self, which is in truth the ego, often held in abeyance, sacrificed, often starved and cramped by the outer personality we wear before the world.

And gradually things began to clear and she saw her life as it would probably be henceforth. Her zeal looked forth over a vista of achievement she would fain reach, and the prospect made her glow like a Crusader in sight of Jerusalem—but she saw herself faltering toward it sometimes because she scarcely knew how to reach it, or because she had not the strength to press on.

And then it seemed the figure of Cepeda came with his strong grasp on life, his entire hold on Christian duty, with a spirituality that called to her, that struck the real keynote of her nature as

no man had ever done before. And then she knew the way must be traveled with his help.

Once her mind had spoken, her heart began to say aloud what the charm of his personality, what the delightful sympathy of his kindred intellect and tastes had always given her, running unrestrainedly now over the whole gamut of their affinities.

Later that night Katherine wrote this note to be mailed to Howard Robertson in the morning:

"MY DEAR FRIEND:

"I write to tell you to come to-morrow evening armed with your congratulations. I am going to marry Don Alonzo de Cepeda. As my only old friend here, and as a dear one always, come, give me your blessing, and try to believe me always,

"Your friend, sincerely and fondly,

"KATHERINE EASTON."

"WHERE LAUGHTER DIES."

BY MADGE MANNIX.

"It is a hypothetical case," said the man.

The girl stood still in the curve of the path. Her eyes swept over the valley and down to the distant sea. "How lovely!" she said, softly. "How lovely! I have never been here before."

"No?" The man's gaze followed hers. "It is the most beautiful view in Las Palmas. If we go a little farther down we can get a wider glimpse of the ocean."

"This is wide enough," she answered. "Let us stay here." She seated herself upon the huge exposed roots of the live-oak in whose shade they stood. "And look, and look, and look."

The man dropped down beside her. "And look—and look," he echoed under his breath, his eyes on her glowing face.

She drank in the beauty of the quiet scene—valley and foothills, distant mountains and still more distant sea—with a long sigh of delight.

"And you see this every day," she said dreamily.

"And you?" he asked. "What do you see?"

"Buildings," she said. "Brick buildings and smoke. Don't let's talk about it."

The man gathered up a handful of dead leaves. "May I talk of something else?" he asked, examining them intently. "That hypothetical case I began to tell you of a moment ago?"

She turned to him in quick contrition. "Pardon me," she said. "I interrupted you, didn't I? Without a sign of an apology. Let me see," she prompted, smiling, "it was a hypothetical case?"

The man's glance met hers, reflectively. "Well," he began, "it's this way. Suppose a fellow I know is awfully gone on a girl. I think that's what you United States people say, isn't it?"

"Well, no," said the girl, the laughter deepening in her eyes. "No; most of us do *not*. But it conveys a definite meaning, nevertheless. So, Mr. Englishman, we will let it stand. I am becoming interested; we are to suppose, then, that your friend is 'gone'—"

"Awfully gone—so much so that there is no doubt about it in his own mind. Suppose it is the first time that this sort of thing has ever happened to him, and that he has thought about it a great deal, and is convinced that it will last as long as his life lasts—and beyond." His voice lingered on the word. "And suppose," he went on, "that he has only known her a month, and that in another month she will have gone out of his life again. Suppose he has only that little time in which to show her what he feels for her—one month out of all the years. Here's where I want you to help me. What is he to do? Tell her, and run the risk of putting an end to everything? Or let things shape themselves, and again risk losing, by his silence, what he might have gained had he spoken?"

The girl looked out over the valley. "A month," she said, thoughtfully.

"Yes; a month to do or leave undone—everything."

"I was not thinking of that," she replied. "I was thinking—how can your friend know his own mind regarding the girl—in so short a time as a month?"

The man sat up suddenly. "He *does*," he said, with quiet emphasis.

The girl glanced at him, smiling. "Well, then, he does. It is not often possible—but since you state it so positively, he does. It seems to me that there is where all the trouble lies."

The man lay back again, with his head on his folded arms, and stared up into the cloudless sky. "All the joy," he said, softly. "Whatever comes of it—all the joy."

The girl was silent. "It is too hard for me," she said, at

length. "There are so many women, and so many men—how can I decide for any one of them, or any two?"

He turned his head. "For yourself," he asked, watching her. "How would you decide for yourself?"

Her color deepened. "For myself?" she repeated vaguely.

"Yes. If you had come, just as you have, from the heart of an American city, into the heart of the Mexican wilderness, and if a man had grown to love you in the thirty days you had spent in that wilderness; and if in another month you were to be lost to him—forever?"

She rose, slowly. "What would I have him do?" she asked. "Is that it? How would I have him use the time still left him?"

He was on his feet, and for an instant she met his level gaze.

"If I were the girl," she said, "I would have him do *nothing.*"

"Nothing!" echoed the man. The word seemed to lodge in his throat.

She nodded her head, her eyes averted. "A month is too short a time to decide one's life. It would be safer and wiser to let things shape themselves."

"But will they?"

"Who knows? Sometimes they do—sometimes they do not."

"Nothing," said the man, again, under his breath. "Nothing. And meanwhile—" He broke off suddenly.

"Thank you," he continued after a moment, in a changed tone. "And forgive me for persisting so. You see, it meant so much to—my friend."

Their eyes met—and he laughed.

"And she knew," he said, lightly, "and he knew that she knew, and—she knew that he knew that she knew."

The girl looked at him curiously. "You can always laugh," she exclaimed.

He followed her slowly up the path. "Yes," he said—"yes; I can always laugh."

* * * * *

That night Elizabeth Grantfield sat upon the arm of her father's chair, watching the moon rise in thoughtful silence. "Papa," she began, at length, "when are you going back to the mines?"

"In about ten days," her father answered. "Why?"

"Because I should like to go with you, this time." She ran her fingers lightly through his hair. "May I?"

He hesitated. "It's a pretty rough place, dear, and warm, too. I'm afraid you wouldn't like it after you got there."

"Yes, I would," she hastened to say. "I've never been anywhere in the least like that. Please, papa—"

He smiled at the coaxing voice.

"All right, Betty," he said, "but remember you can't come back to Las Palmas until I'm ready after you are once there. Better stay here where it is cooler, and let Blanco amuse you."

"Papa," she said, with sudden gravity, "his name is White. Why don't you call him by it?"

"Why, my dear child, I actually forgot that it was his name. No one about here calls him anything but Blanco."

"I know it," she answered. "But that's because so many of the people can't say his real name. We can."

Mr. Grantfield laughed. "It's all the same, little woman, Spanish or English. Both words mean the same thing." His daughter gave his hair a final caress.

"White is his name," she repeated calmly. "Then I'm going with you to the mines?"

"Yes—if you insist."

"I insist," she said.

* * * * *

The girl settled down beside her father in the creaking stage. "It's going to be a warm ride, isn't it, papa?" she said.

"Yes," answered her father. "Isn't that Blanco, over there?"

She turned a careless head. "Yes."

The man crossing the courtyard broke into a run as the driver threw in the last mail-bag.

"Just in time," he called.

He shook hands with Mr. Grantfield. "Sometimes," he said, turning to the girl, "things shape themselves—"

He waited, his eyes demanding more than the silence in which she sat.

"And sometimes," she answered, with an odd little break in her voice, "sometimes they do not."

The man stepped back from the moving wheel. "Good-by," he said.

* * * * *

Carlos Blanco leaned back against the wide veranda pillar and watched the point of light at the end of his discarded cigar glowing in the darkness. His eyes were very grave.

She was back again—the girl who had taken his heart out of his breast and made him lonely and heartsick and sad. But no! Even in his own thoughts he hastened to vindicate her. It was not she—it was his own madness. "Do nothing," she had said to him. "Nothing!" Surely that was plain enough. "Nothing!" his sore heart echoed it now, as he went back over the past lonely year. Nothing but love her and long for her every day of his life.

With a sigh he buried his face in his hands. "You fool!" he said, under his breath. "You poor, crazy fool!"

A light breeze sprang up and stirred in the vines, the moonlight crept up the broad steps little by little, and shone at last on his bowed head. Its radiance roused him. He stood up, wearily. "Whatever I do," he said aloud, "has got to be done right now."

To go or stay? The question swung like a pendulum in his tired brain. How wise to go before he had seen her again—for a year he had borne the aching hunger in his heart, he had expected to bear it all his life. And yet—the chance was suddenly, incredibly his—just to see her once more, to see her and hear her—

Something like a prayer stirred in him. He lifted his face to the quiet sky.

"If it's any use," he said, "help me, help me!"

* * * * *

In August the desert wind begins to blow at Las Palmas, and it is hot. For three days at a time the sun beats down from a cloudless sky, and the valley swims in a haze of fire. Every blade of grass shrivels and dies—the leaves curl on the trees, and crackle like burned paper beneath the touch, the heat is breathless, annihilating. The very cattle seek the deepest shade and lie gasping. It is a strange thing to one who has not spent his life there—those three days, pitiless, endless, and always three.

And then—at the close of the third day—a fleck of white appears in the blue, and another, and another.

Far out on the horizon a line of fog gathers and grows and rolls steadily inland; the huge furnace-doors of the desert close, and the salt sea wind, cool and fresh and laden with moisture, sweeps back over the burning earth.

Elizabeth Grantfield and Carlos Blanco had sought refuge in the patio of the hotel. The heat was a shade less intense there only because the wind was shut out. Even the sound of the fountain splashing in the sun conveyed no hint of coolness.

Elizabeth sighed listlessly. "One more day of this, yet," she said.

Blanco swung lazily in his hammock. "Alas, yes!" he replied. He laughed a little. "*Hace mucho calor.*"

She frowned. "Why do you laugh?" she asked.

"Because that was the first Spanish sentence I learned—'*Hace mucho calor.*' Keep a thing seven years, they say, and it becomes useful." He laughed again. "I have kept that little sentence twice seven years—and to-day I find it very useful indeed."

The girl leaned forward to watch an oriole at the fountain edge. "You laugh too much," she said, slowly.

An instant of silence followed her words.

The man's face changed. "Do I?" he asked, with sudden gravity. His eyes followed hers to where the bird darted back

and forth in the sunshine—shaking the glistening drops from its bright wings. The swaying of the hammock ceased.

"Do you think," he asked in a curiously quiet voice, "that it is an easy thing to learn to laugh? Have you ever fancied that a man might cling to laughter because he dared not let it go?"

She looked at him quickly.

"No," she replied. "No; I never have. But you take everything and every one so lightly—"

"Not you!" Blanco leaned forward—but for a moment after his sudden words he did not speak. There was no sound but that of the falling water. "Not you!" he said again, very low. "I love you with all my heart and soul."

The girl drew in her breath sharply. "Oh, no!" she whispered. She rose, shrinking a little from his eyes.

"Yes," he said. He got to his feet and they stood facing each other. "From the first hour—and while you were here for me to see—and after you were gone, and I had only the memory of you. For more than a year I have thought of you day and night—and loved you, loved you, loved you."

She shook her head. "You must not," she said—but so faintly that he could scarcely hear the words.

"Why not? Tell me—why not?"

She looked up at him. "I could never marry you," she said. "Never, never!"

"Why not?" he asked again.

She hesitated—then her words came swiftly. "Oh—because! Because I could not live in Mexico—I should die away from my own country, and my own people." It was like a lesson she had learned by heart. "It's too bright here—the moonlight—the sunlight! Oh, I should go mad!"

A dreary smile stole into Blanco's eyes. "Don't," he said. "Dear little girl, don't! Tell me the truth."

She turned away with a sort of desperate movement. "I can't." Suddenly she faced him again. "You laugh too much. That's the truth. I am afraid of it—it shows some lack in you.

You take everything with a laugh, comfort and discomfort, gladness and disappointment, *everything*. What does it mean?" Her voice changed. "This sounds silly, I know," she said, "and childish, and futile, but it is not. I can not express myself clearly, but I know in my own heart that I am right. It is not the laughing, it is what it means, that counts. You drift too much—why, you are not even called by your own name, just because you don't care enough. Carlos Blanco—what kind of a name is that for an Englishman?"

His face was gray. "If I were Charles White would you love me?" he asked, gently.

"You are Charles White," she answered, angry at herself that she could so wound him, yet feeling miserably that she was right. "And because the Mexicans and the Spaniards here in Las Palmas found it hard at first, you let them call you that—'Carlos Blanco'—you never hear your own name."

Her last words were lost in the sudden clatter of hoofs as the stage swung noisily through the archway and into the courtyard. She followed it with unseeing eyes, until with a final lurch it stood still. Then she turned to go.

"Forgive me," she said, in a low voice.

"Dear child," he answered, "I have nothing to forgive."

For a moment she stood with averted head, the gentleness of his voice stabbing her; then she left him and went up the steps, and into her darkened room.

She sank into a low chair near the window, and leaned back with a little sigh. It was over, at last, this thing which she had known must come. In a little while she would feel relieved, she was sure of it, but just now she ached in every nerve, physically and mentally.

In a vague, disjointed way her thoughts went back to the beginning, to the days they had spent together, and then to the year of absolute separation and silence which had followed; and finally she found herself going over in memory the events of the past month. She thrust it all back with an impatient sigh. His eyes, as she had seen them last, haunted her. "I never liked

a man with brown eyes," she said, half aloud, defiantly. "Why should I marry a man with brown eyes when I never liked them?" After a few moments, she stooped and looked out beneath the lowered curtains. He was still there, where she had left him, and as she looked he turned a little toward her. She drew in her breath sharply—surely she had not done that! Why should his face be like that, and why should he stand there, staring, staring, with those wide, miserable eyes?

She stood up—irresolute, but the curtain hid him from her, and because she must see, she knelt down upon the floor. As she did so he turned his head again, and with that sudden certainty that sometimes unaccountably seizes the heart, she felt that he was not thinking of her, nor of the things which had concerned her, and that his eyes were fixed upon some person or thing hidden from her view, at the farther side of the court.

She did not question nor endeavor to shake off the conviction which settled upon her; it seemed to her to have been true since the beginning of time; she only watched him, scarcely realizing that she did so—this man whom all at once she did not know, from whose face the mask of laughter had fallen at last. She knew, without a doubt, that it was not of her he thought as he stood there. And, without asking herself why, she was angry at him, and lonely and desolate.

The chatter of the maids in the next room roused her. She started up to shut out the sound which came, as she saw, through the open transom. They were talking together in the Spanish tongue:

"Does that look fine enough for the Honorable Richard White to sleep on?" one of them said, laughing. "Who is he?" asked the other. "He owns the Fortuna Mine," was the answer. "Catch me coming from England—"

Elizabeth shut the transom softly. Her knowledge of Spanish was slight, and the words took meaning slowly, but of one thing she was sure—the name she had heard. It arrested her thoughts. She stood motionless in the middle of the room, trying to remember where she had heard it before. Suddenly, with a quick

breath, she crossed to a small bookcase, and drew out a folio of sketches and kodak views which Blanco had lent her.

After a moment's search she took a small picture from an inner pocket of the book, and went over to the light, kneeling down once more, and examining it intently. It was an old-fashioned photograph, a sweet-faced woman, upon either side of whom stood a little smiling boy, their chubby hands clasped upon her knee. Below it was written in a sprawling, childish hand, "Charles and Richard White, on mother's birthday."

Elizabeth could not see for the tears that filled her eyes. The pity of it—the infinite distance which lay between Carlos Blanco, staring with his white face at the owner of the Fortuna Mine, and the two little boys with hands clasped on their mother's knee! That was what he had meant when he said one must learn to laugh—he had left so much behind him which she had never known, nor could know—sad and mad and unforgettable.

Her eyes went back to him, wistfully. He sat alone, on the stone bench where she had been sitting a short while before. With new understanding she saw the unfamiliar lines in his face, lines which separated him from her the width of the world, and the length of all time. His laughter had hidden them, his brave laughter which, while it charmed her, she had secretly despised.

For a long while she knelt there, then her lips moved. "I am a coward," she said. She got up slowly and laid the picture upon the table.

Then she opened the door and went down the steps and out across the courtyard, to the man sitting there. As she neared him, a panic seized her. What if he should look at her as if she were a stranger; he had forgotten all about her. She was suddenly afraid. She stood, hesitating, and he glanced up and saw her.

For an instant his eyes met hers dully and without recognition. Then the old look filled them, the look they had worn for her always.

He got to his feet, his lips twisting oddly.

Elizabeth watched him with a pang of pity. "He thinks he is smiling," she said to herself. "Poor thing, poor thing."

Her fear vanished, she looked at him with a slow smile. "I love you," she said. "I love you with all my heart and soul."

He caught his breath. "What do you mean?" he asked hoarsely. "For God's sake, Elizabeth, what do you mean?"

She still smiled tremulously. "Everything," she answered.

He started toward her, but she put out a pleading hand. "Wait," she begged. "Wait! I must tell you all of it. I tried not to. But it was from the very beginning, always. I would rather spend my life with you, here, than—" She broke off with a half sob. "Oh, you know, don't you, dear?"

He took one of her hands and folded it close in both his own. "Yes," he said. "Yes; I know." His eyes, with the shadows of the past still on them, blessed her, and comforted her, and wrapped her round with their tenderness.

She lifted her face, beseechingly. "Laugh, Carlos Blanco! Laugh!" she whispered.

But he shook his head. "I can not," he said, "when I am as happy as this."

THE RICH MISS BANNERMAN.

BY MARY E. MANNIX.

I ONCE spent a very pleasant six months in Australia, and while there came into possession of the facts related in the following story. They were told me by the Superior of the Convent, where I was privileged to live as a boarder during my stay. It was her wish that I should give it to the public after a reasonable period of time, when she should have passed to a better life; as she was even then stricken with a mortal disease.

"I presume you never heard of her," she said, "but the rich Miss Bannerman was once the toast of many a diner in the most fashionable circles of the Scotch capital. Her father had left her an immense fortune, which she spent lavishly both in amusement and, I must acknowledge, in good works; for she had a kind, if undisciplined, heart. She had received her education from the best masters, and was considered beautiful and fascinating by *connoisseurs* in those often ill-named attributes.

"She was fond of pleasure, and constantly flitted from place to place in search of it, spending much time at the famous resorts of France, England, and Germany. She did not lack suitors, but no one had ever yet touched her heart. And now she was twenty-four. One morning at Ems she passed on the promenade two young men in the garb of ecclesiastical students. One of them, an ordinary looking individual, glanced at her respectfully but admiringly. The other did not look in her direction. She thought him the handsomest man she had ever seen. About her own age, tall, distinguished-looking, with a face of remarkable intelligence. The thought that impressed itself most forcibly on her Presbyterian mind was: 'What a pity that such a man should bury him-

self in the Catholic priesthood.' She was a wilful and impulsive person, who had never denied herself anything she wanted; and then and there she resolved that she would become acquainted with that young man, and that, if she could prevent it, he should not become a Catholic priest. She knew nothing of our holy faith, but despised it and all things appertaining to it. I shall not here relate what arts she used to compass her purpose, but she did meet the young student as she had resolved, and so wound herself about him with her womanly, though not unmaidenly, wiles, that he succumbed to her charm, and soon fell as desperately in love with her as she was with him; at least that is what they both thought at the time. His companion warned him, but to no purpose. He was a young German, of great talent and some means of his own. His preceptors at the Seminary reasoned with him, but all in vain. Finally they let him go, persuaded that if any one had ever been granted a vocation, and lost it, he was the man.

"The engagement was short, but as the days went by she felt a nameless dissatisfaction, though she still loved him. She did not doubt his affection for her, yet there seemed an impenetrable barrier between them, due to the religion from which she could not at that time, and was persuaded never would be able to, make him swerve one inch. She dreaded the future, when their ideals, one by one, must inevitably grow as far apart as their ideas; for she did not, for a single moment, conceive that time would work any change in her own beliefs. Still, she loved him, or fancied she did, and took a certain pride, moreover, in the consciousness that she had wrested him from the grasp of errors she regarded as monstrous and diabolical. On his side she saw no hesitation, no regrets; she believed him to be perfectly happy and content.

"The morning of the marriage day came. They stood before the priest to pronounce their vows; for he would not, for an instant, consider her desire to be married by a minister. This fact it was that had caused her to think seriously of the future. As they stood there, before the clergyman could speak, he turned to her and said: 'Ellen, I do not believe I was ever intended for matrimony. God called me to be a priest, and a priest I shall yet be,

if I can. After what has gone before, I believe I am being punished because since my earliest youth I have decried Peter, and have said hundreds of times that *I* would never deny my Lord. I *have* denied Him—I am Peter, but from this time I hope to be Paul. Will you release me, Ellen? I was not meant to be a married man.'"

"And what did she reply, the poor girl?" I inquired breathlessly.

The Superior smiled as she said:

"The veil fell from her eyes, the shackles from her heart; and in the same moment she answered, with the greatest calmness:

"'George, I agree with you perfectly and entirely. You were meant for a priest, and I have been only a temptation. Pity that for even a time it should have overcome you. Go your way and God bless you.'

"The clergyman stood amazed.

"She turned about in her bridal finery before the assembled guests, and walked calmly down the room and up the stairs. The affair was the talk of the town till a new sensation made it forgotten. He went to a monastery, made a long retreat, and after a time of probation was admitted as a novice. He became a holy and hard-working priest, a wonderful missionary, and held many high offices in the Order. His name was known through three continents as a saver of souls. He died last year in Germany."

"And the lady, what of her?" I asked.

"When she found time to examine her thoughts carefully, she came to the conclusion that a religion and a calling which could take a man from his bride at the altar must have more claims to sanctity than she had imagined—that a faith which could appeal to so clever a man must have some foundation in truth. She read, weighed, sifted, prayed, and at the end of two years became a Catholic—and a nun.

"She brought her large fortune into the Church, and has been permitted to do a great deal of good with it. For through it she has been enabled to see the sick healed and consoled, the poor relieved, the prisoner comforted, the children instructed."

"And where is she now? Do you know her?"

"She is here, talking to you; telling you her own story, that some day, when she is no more, you may tell it to others, as one of thousands of evidences that God moves in most mysterious ways for the furtherance of His all-wise designs in the salvation of souls."

"And the priest? Did he ever know?"

"We met once. It was very odd."

"Were you not both greatly embarrassed?"

"Not at all. I was about to leave England and was traveling with three other Sisters from Liverpool. At the railway station two Benedictines were ahead of us, awaiting their train. In one of them I recognized my old-time friend. I was undecided whether to speak to him or not, when providence ordained it that we should have a few words with each other. His companion, a priest with whom I had a slight acquaintance, brought him forward, saying that we were the four Sisters who were going to found a House of our Order in Australia.

"'We have met before, Father,' I said, quite composedly. 'I was Miss Bannerman.'"

"What did he do?"

"He extended both hands, saying in the heartiest way: '*You* a nun! *You* a nun! and how long?'

"I told him.

"'Thank God, thank God,' he said. 'Oh! there have been many prayers said, but I did not know.' And then the whistle blew and he went away laughing. And that was all."

OLD BARTLEY BANNIM.

BY CATHERINE L. MEAGHER.

He was old, wrinkled, gray and eccentric. He affected the style of dress that was in vogue when he was a youth in Ireland; his trousers were distinguished by their exuberance in general, which at the knees developed into bulginess; his waistcoat was simply a concession to custom, since he always wore it unbuttoned; his coat had the tails of the coat of a tall man, while he was small. Around his neck was a kerchief, colored on week-days, white on Sundays. He carried a blackthorn stick. He preserved the gait he had gotten by unconscious imitation in his childhood's home, and which is almost as much a provincialism as a man's dialect.

He looked like a prophet of old on Sundays with his long gray hair, his hands clasped upward, the fingers bead-entwined, as with rapt expression he prayed God, in tones too audible for his neighbors' patience, to have mercy on his soul.

A man whose religion is his romance, I said to myself, as I saw him doing the Stations on a cold day in the chilly church.

One other haunt knew him nearly as well as the church—it was the little graveyard hard by on the hill. He was a bachelor—did I say?—and a carpenter, as his Master before him.

Years and years had gone until the last of his large family of relatives had left the roof-tree he had made for them; some to homes of their own, and others to the home of humanity. At last he was alone in the quaint gabled house which he had built for his brother's family. In the fall following the last marriage in the family the old man began to rebuild the house. The practical looked on and said he was preparing for a tenant. The

sentimental said he found life lonely and was making ready for a wife. We conservatives, who felt the superiority of not having hazarded a speculation, smiled when a youth, who had the manly air that honesty and self-respect give, appeared in our village and asked to be directed to Bartley Bannim's. Straight from Ireland he hailed, we heard, and was a son of an old schoolmate and friend from whom Bartley had not heard since he himself had left Ireland many years gone.

It was one of the happiest nights in Bartley's life, as with heightened color, bright eyes, and frequent laugh—a little hoarse for want of exercise—he inquired about his old friends and the once familiar places.

"An' so your father heerd of me whereabouts through Tim Donohue, did he? I didn't know at all that Tim wint back to Ireland. You tell me your father's hale and hearty. But shure he's a young man yet. And all John Ryan's family have gone to Austrelia. Do you know if they cut turf still in the ould bog by Tim Finnegan's? An' about the chapel, is it changed, or does it stand the same?" Before Hagerty had finished his answers a roar of laughter greeted him from his listener. "Did you ever hear your father tell o' the awful batin' I gev him at the spellin' lesson?" (Literal beating, be it remarked, not figurative; for Bartley and young Hagerty's father had been disciples of Master Kennedy, who "ministered correction" to their failures by means of one another and the rod. The boy who spelled correctly had the coveted privilege of "latherin'" all the unfortunates who failed.)

Hagerty, recalling his father's size, wondered if the old man's imagination had not dealt kindly with the facts.

Bartley continued to question in the inconsequent manner of a man of memories. The night wore on, his happiness unbated; at last there came a pause—he poked the fire and looked hard at the same. When he spoke it was haltingly. "Do you know annything—can you tell me annything about Father O'Rourke, o' Timplemore? Dead, is he?" In a startled tone, and then hurriedly, "An' his sister Kate—do you know annything of her?"

"Just a little," the young man answered with a smile.

The old man turned, and in tones almost fierce with impatience, said:

"Out with it, man! What is it you know?"

"That she's my mother."

The listening man gazed in a dazed sort of way and gasped with difficulty. "Kate O'Rourke your mother? Did Ned Hagerty marry the priest's sister?"

"He did."

The old man fell heavily back in his chair.

The doctor pronounced it a paralytic stroke due to unusual excitement. Before the doctor left the man had recovered consciousness and was almost free from pain.

When all had gone and he was again alone with his young friend, the sick man beckoned the other to him. Hagerty moved his chair to the bedside.

"It isn't excitement, lad, though it's glad I am to see you. 'Tis a broken heart! That's what's the matter. I loved your mother, me boy, loved her since she was a mere slip of a girl—though I never tould her a word of it. But I thought she couldn't help knowin' what was takin' me to the priest's house so often. I thought 'twould be presumin' in me to speak of marriage when I could but poorly keep meself. I med up me mind to come away to America, to be strivin' and savin' an' go back in a few years' time a comfortable man, whin I could offer her as good a home as I'd be takin' her from. But when I got here to me brother Tom's, I found more want an' privation than I had left behind me at home. A house full of childern an' nothin' to keep 'em. Tom was never much of a hand to make out, so what else was there for me to do but take holt an' help him? It took all we could both do for a few years to keep things goin', an' just as I was biginnin' to think of strikin' out for meself, Tom fell from a scaffoldin' an' was killed, an' the family fell to me intirely. We were gettin' on our feet when the wife went, too. A few more years of strugglin' an' Jim, the eldest, a likely lad, fell sick with a lingerin' illness.

"The hope of goin' back home died out of me heart. I thought 'twas God's will I should go on as I was, an' I tried to do it. But when the youngest an' last niece married an' left me—the one I counted on for the comfort of me last days—me thoughts went back to me youth an' the woman I loved, an' hope took holt of me agin. I thought I'd put the old house in shape, an' when the fine weather'd come I'd take a trip back to Timplemore, an' who knows, said I to meself, but that I'd find Kate O'Rourke there yet to the good.

"Every day I felt that God would be givin' me this one comfort for me last days, for I hadn't had many of the things men call blessin's in this life. At last from hopin' 'twas true I kem to believin' 'twas true that Kate was waitin' there in Ireland for me. An' when I'd be sittin' alone o' nights I used to think 'twas the voice of God tellin' me to make haste an' be gone. Men think quare things when they're alone much o' the time."

Here the pent-up passion of years broke forth in wails of, "Kate, I love you. I never harbored another woman in me thoughts, though I never mintioned your name to man or mortal since I crossed the say. If on'y I had written a scratch to you in all these years it wouldn't be so sore now. Little do you know, me girl, the longin' an' the love that's been in an old man's heart for you. Ah God, even in heaven I'll have no claim on her! Mebbe it's what you never knew I loved you, asthore. I thought I oughtn't ax you to lave a comfortable home to go into oncertainties, an' 'twould only be a few years till I'd be goin' back a rich man; but 'twas not to be! 'twas not to be!"

The old man rambled on incoherently among the scenes of his boyhood. At daylight Hagerty came to his bedside, but he did not recognize the youth. His thoughts were with God and the girl he had loved. The old exalted expression was on his face, and his hands were clasped upward with the ever-present rosary. His lips were forming the words, "Lord, have mercy on my soul and bless her"—the refrain of years. A smile settled on his features as if he saw the Vision that atones for all lost love.

His countrymen gave the last proof possible of their kindly feeling by bearing their old friend to his resting-place. As we filed out past the casket placed at the church door, I read the inscription: "Bartley Bannim. Aged 64 years. *Requiescat in pace.*" Sixty-four! So hardly does Time deal with one who takes no thought of self.

THE GHOST-CHEST OF KNOCKMARROON.

BY CLARA MULHOLLAND.

"I HATE him, simply hate him! There's no use mincing matters, and I sha'n't and won't!" And the girl flushed hotly, and stamped her little foot angrily upon the graveled path. "How you can keep so cool and collected, auntie, I can't imagine."

"My dear, my dear!" Mrs. Delany drew her niece's hand within her arm, and stroked it affectionately. "It is not such a trial to me as to you naturally. My childhood was passed happily here. But, then, I have been married and away from Knockmarroon for some twenty years, remember."

"A hundred years' absence could make no difference to me," fiercely. "The wound made by the selling of the dear old home will be as fresh when I'm dropping into the grave as it is now. And I just feel," clenching her fists, "that I detest the man who has bought it. If I were to meet him—"

"On a dark night—alone—you'd be dangerous," laughed Mrs. Delany. "But, my dear, angry, inconsistent, absurd Marcella, only last month you were sighing your heart out for a purchaser for the house and estate. Even Biddy said to me the other day, 'Sure, the darlin'll die if the place isn't got rid of. It's frettin' to death she is, that the old master's debts can't be paid.' And now it seems to me the fretting's all the other way."

"Oh! I am inconsistent and foolish and absurd—all you say is true," moaned the girl. "I'm glad on the one hand, fit to sob my heart out on the other. That father's debts should be

paid is right, and much to be desired. But that Knockmarroon should go—and go to a vulgar, purse-proud parvenu, who'll cover the walls with Morris papers, stick them on, I feel sure, over the old leather, for it will not come off, and put Utrecht velvet on the chairs and sofas! The thought makes me sick."

"You ought really to have more sense—"

"The dear old house! And the dilapidated stables, and the picturesque, tumbling-down, delightful summer house! Auntie, they'll all be new and fresh—done up by twentieth century workmen! Think of it!"

"And a good thing, too. If some workmen don't get their hands on it, there will be a collapse, at least, among the outhouses. Why, some of them," pointing round the farmyard, where they had paused for a moment, "are swaying now in the wind."

"Of course. They are dear things. They've done that for years. And the wind is high this afternoon."

"To my mind," Mrs. Delany said, "it's a most merciful dispensation of Providence that this wealthy young man took it into his head to buy an estate in Galway—otherwise you might have gone on moldering here till your beauty was gone, and you were as dilapidated as these," with a wave of her hand, "old barns. Now you'll have to come into the world, and show yourself. Really, Marcella, I am full of hope. You ought to marry well. Apart from your clinging love for Knockmarroon, and your foolish dislike for this man, who, in reality, is the best friend you have, you are a very charming and sensible young woman."

"Yes," Marcella said, absently, her eyes wandering across the farmyard and away toward the paddocks, with their shady trees and rich, green turf. "People have told me so. Poor father used to say— But, oh! what does it matter? Once I leave Knockmarroon—"

"You'll find what a good thing it is to live, my sweet Marcella. You'll have the best of good luck—"

"Good luck? Oh, no! I'll be leaving that behind. It—"

Marcella clutched her aunt by the arm, "I never thought of it till now—is—or rather must be left—thrown in as a fixture with dear old Knockmarroon!"

"It? My dear girl! What do you mean?"

"The ghost-chest!" Marcella's blue eyes were full of terror. "If we part with that! Oh, Aunt Maura, could I take it with me? Would you have room for it—"

"In my spare bedroom? Certainly not. It must," with a laugh of derision, "be left as a fixture, and I am quite sure the ghost will not mind. Don't be ridiculous, Marcella."

"I can't bear to leave it. Since father put it out of the house everything has gone wrong."

"What nonsense! The going wrong dates back many years before that. Where is it now?"

"Here!" Marcella threw open the door of a rickety-looking shed, out of which flew a couple of terrified and attenuated hens.

"A nice resting-place, truly!"

"Horrible!" Marcella shivered. "But it was the best I could do. I paid for the shelf out of my own pocket money."

"Foolish girl! It seems to me you're a mass of superstition. The sooner I get you away from this place the better. What do you suppose is in this old chest?"

"I—I don't know. Some say one thing, some say another. The people are all afraid of it."

Mrs. Delany put up her long tortoise-shell glass, and approaching, stood on tiptoe to examine the ghost-chest of Knockmarroon. It was made of dark gray stone, and shaped like a coffin. On its lid and sides were a few rude carvings, so much rubbed and worn that it was impossible to say what they were meant to represent. The lid of this curious old box fitted in quite tightly, and although there were no visible fastenings, it was obvious, at the first glance, that only great force would open it.

"To my mind you should have buried the thing, instead of perching it up on a shelf," Mrs. Delany said, with a sniff. "It's horribly suggestive of death, and ought to have been put out of sight."

"I think I'll have that done to-morrow," Marcella said, laying her cheek against the cold stone. "I could not have parted with it before— But now," sighing, "it must go with the rest. The dear old thing has given me many happy hours, Aunt Maura. I used to sit and fancy all kinds of things about it. Sometimes it was full of gold—"

Mrs. Delany burst into a merry laugh.

"My dear, imaginative, dreamy Marcella, would that it were! Gold? O dear me! Old bones, I say. But," with a sudden change of tone, "come along. I don't like the thing. It's uncanny."

"That's what most people think. Father hated it. But I have always fancied that, sooner or later, it would bring me good luck. No," putting up her hand quickly. "Please don't laugh again, and say I'm silly. I'll take your advice, and have it buried."

That night a terrific storm swept over the land, and shook the old house to its foundations. Slates, chimney pots, and panes of glass flew hither and thither in all directions. In the park big trees were flung their length upon the ground, on the lawn shrubs and flowers were torn up by the roots and scattered ruthlessly over the grass.

"How fortunate I am no longer called upon to put things right," thought Marcella, viewing the scene the next morning with tearful eyes. "Poor old home! 'Twould seem as if the very elements resented my leaving it to strangers. And yet it had to be, it had to be! Well, Shamus, what's the matter? You look as if you'd seen a ghost."

"Och, Miss dear, sure," gasped Shamus, the one man left about the place. "Sorra ghost I seen—an' sure that's the wondher—for the old barn's down—knocked to bits with the storm. The ghost-chest's open—"

Marcella turned pale as death.

"Open?" she clasped her hands convulsively. "And what—Oh, what's in it, Shamus?"

"Begorra, not one of me dared look, Miss dear. I just ran off—"

But he spoke to the wind. Marcella was gone, and Shamus hurried on to the kitchen to tell his story there.

To the barn ran Marcella in breathless haste, and there on the ground, amidst pieces of timber, lumps of thatch, bricks, and crumbled mortar, she found the old chest, unbroken, but lidless. Some of its contents strewn round it, others hanging over its sides, or lying untouched among the straw, in which they had been carefully packed away perhaps a century before.

"Well?" asked Mrs. Delany, suddenly appearing, with uplifted skirts and scorn-tilted nose, in the midst of the *débris*. "Are you to go to Dublin as an heiress? The beautiful Marcella Blake enriched by gold, found in the ghost-chest of Knockmarroon!"

"There is no gold, Aunt Maura." Marcella turned a white, awe-stricken face toward Mrs. Delany. "There are a few old goblets—silver, I think. A picture or two—some coins, and," holding up a silken garment, rich in texture but faded and somewhat worn, with epaulets on the sleeves, and large and handsome buttons down the front.

"How curious!" cried Aunt Maura, snatching it from the girl's hand. "'Tis—yes, it must be—the dress of the old Irish Dragoons! Dear me! This is interesting. Just as they have started a new regiment of Irish Guards, too, on which, I hear, are to be buttons bearing the same crest as these in the year—Oh, I'm very bad at dates! Our great-grandfather was one, and this must have belonged to him. Put into a stone coffin, to be buried with all his high hopes. But," with an exclamation of delight, "these buttons are lovely. Buttons, you know, dear, are a perfect craze at present. On a dark, well-made bolero, these will be most *chic*. So, I declare, after all, the old chest has brought you good luck. But how—why? What on earth ails you, girl?"

Marcella made no reply. With her head bowed down upon the edge of the ghost-chest, she was sobbing as though her heart would break.

* * * * *

Leaving Knockmarroon with all its tender memories was a severe trial, and as she drove down the old avenue of splendid trees, and looked her last at the house where she had been born and brought up, Marcella told herself, with many a tear, that life for her was over, and that she did not care where she went or what became of her. But at nineteen the soul is, fortunately, endowed with a considerable amount of recuperative power, the spirits seldom remain for any lengthened period in a state of depression, and so, before long, our heroine began to see that even outside the charmed gates of her ancestral home there was much that was enjoyable. Life was not the dreary blank she had expected to find it. Mrs. Delany was a delightful hostess. To her dinners and dances flocked the highest and best that Dublin could produce. Marcella was a beautiful, graceful, clever girl, free from airs or affectation, and so she soon found herself a favorite, the very center of attraction. Every one was so kind, and things generally so pleasant, that her spirits improved, and she often told herself that she ought to be happy, as happy almost as in the old days before her father and mother died, and she knew nothing of care or sorrow.

As Marcella's spirits rose, Mrs. Delany's went down. The girl's success delighted her. She rejoiced when she heard her admired and saw her the belle of every ball or reception. But, alas! this was not enough. Admirers were very well, and made life pleasant. But more was required. Marcella must marry. And Marcella had no fortune. In Dublin, men were charming, handsome, and gallant. But money was a scarce commodity, and the cost of living very great. For some years, as long as she lived, the girl would have a home. But after that she could not bear to think of what might happen. She had nothing to bequeath to any one, and her husband, though well-to-do, and one of the most generous of men, could not leave money away from his own family. So there was only one thing for Marcella Blake to do, and that was to get married as quickly as she could.

"And yet, I confess, I know no one quite suitable for my

darling girl," she reflected one day, following her niece with admiring eyes as she passed to and fro, surrounded by a bevy of fine-looking, well-dressed men.

It was the first afternoon of the Horse Show at Ball's Bridge, and crowds of people from all parts of the world filled the place to overflowing. There were beautiful girls from England, France, and America. But among them all Marcella reigned supreme. In a simple but exquisitely made blue dress, the silver buttons found in the old ghost-chest upon the little coat, a big picture-hat with drooping black feathers casting a soft shadow over her face, with its dazzlingly fair skin and large, luminous blue eyes, Marcella gazed about her with the unconsciousness of a happy child, thoroughly delighted with herself and the gay scene.

As she paused and leaned against the railing, watching with keen excitement the spirited horses and their well-trained riders dashing round the wide stretch of grass, taking the various high and difficult jumps as they went, a delicately refined and handsome man of thirty or so turned and looked at the girl, not as most men did, with eyes of admiration upon her lovely face, but with an expression of wondering inquiry at the buttons on her dress.

"That's splendid," cried Marcella, with enthusiastic delight and all unconscious of his gaze, as a beautiful bay mare flew like a bird across the big water jump. "If I were rich I'd buy that pretty creature, and hunt—" She stopped and moved a little closer to her companion, her color rising slightly. She had noticed the stranger's observation of her buttons and resented it.

"Who on earth is that?" she asked, as he hurried away, evidently in some confusion at being discovered. "He looks like a gentleman, and yet—"

"He is a gentleman," her escort replied, smiling. "And they tell me a woman-hater. He lives alone in some big barn of a place he has purchased lately in Galway. He's very rich, and—"

"In Galway?" Marcella crimsoned to her hair. "Do you know where? I—come from Galway, you know, and so—"

"Marcella, dearest," said Mrs. Delany, coming up suddenly behind the girl, "allow me to introduce Mr. Grahame Browne. His mother and I were very dear friends once upon a time, and he is anxious to make your acquaintance."

Marcella turned, a smile upon her lips, but it faded quickly as she recognized the obnoxious gentleman who had stared so rudely at her silver buttons.

"A woman-hater," she thought, raising her head haughtily, after a stiff recognition of her aunt's introduction. "'Tis well to know that. But why on earth does he wish to know me?"

"Mr. Grahame Browne is charmed with your buttons," Mrs. Delany remarked, with a malicious smile. "He never saw anything like them before."

"Excuse me—that is not quite correct," the young man replied, looking up with a straight, frank glance. "I have seen *one* exactly like them, and that is what has excited my curiosity so much. I trust you will forgive me, Miss Blake. But they are very beautiful and very curious."

"Very. I am glad you admire them," Marcella answered in her sweet, musical voice, all her disdain and hauteur vanishing before his simple frankness. "I think them beautiful, and love them dearly. But then," her eyes filling with tears, "they remind me of my dear old home in Galway."

He started and changed color.

"Knockmarroon?" he said softly. "Oh, Miss Blake, how you must hate me! I should never have spoken to you—never have dared ask to be introduced— Only when I saw those buttons I forgot everything. In fact, I did not know who you were, till, quite by chance, I met Mrs. Delany, and she—"

"Insisted on introducing you?" Marcella said, with a gay, sweet glance. "And she was quite right. One must always forgive one's enemies—and I assure you," laughing, "I have long since forgiven Mr. Grahame Browne for having purchased Knock-

marroon. It was a real white elephant, dearly as I loved it. I—I hope"—with a little catch in her voice—"you are happy there?"

"Very," he answered, his eyes raised above the wonderful buttons, and fixed now upon her lovely face. "I can hardly bear to drag myself away from it."

"And the barns are all rebuilt, and the walls are done with fresh paper?" she cried almost contemptuously. "There are new carpets and curtains and—and chairs from Gillons & Maples?"

He smiled, and in spite of her excitement, Marcella thought she had never seen a sweeter smile.

"Excuse me," he said. "You are quite wrong. The barns are certainly rebuilt, but the old house is as you left it. New furniture or papers would not suit it at all."

Marcella gave a little gasp of pleasure.

"I am glad. This is grand news. And the ghost-chest?" she inquired breathlessly. "The poor old thing that I used to think contained hidden treasures in gold and silver, and which the servants swore was the home of a weary, earth-bound spirit—did Shamus show you that burst open upon the ground, fallen," she murmured softly to herself, "like the fortunes of the Blakes?"

"Yes. I am intimately acquainted with the ghost-chest," smiling again, "and have treated it with the greatest respect. Its antiquity endeared it to me—as I am somewhat of an archeologist. It is now enthroned in the gallery among many strange and curious objects that I have picked up in my wanderings. It really looks very well."

"I'm sure it does. Oh how"—clasping her little gloved hands tightly together—"I should love to see it!"

"And I trust that some day you may do so," he cried, quite intoxicated by the girl's beauty. It was seldom he noticed women or thought anything about their looks. But Marcella Blake seemed to him like a vision from heaven. "When my mother comes over from America, in the spring, we are to have a big house-party at Knockmarroon. If Mrs. Delany consents, will you come with her and visit your old home?"

Marcella's eyes fell before his, her color deepened, and she laughed a little nervously.

"I think—I may say—yes—if Aunt Maura consents."

"Thank you. I feel sure she will. She would go a long way to see my mother. She little guessed whose son had bought Knockmarroon."

"I had not the vaguest idea," laughed Mrs. Delany. "I always fancied your mother had married a poor man—for love."

"So she did," smiling. "But fortunes are quickly made in our part of the world, Mrs. Delany."

"True," said Mrs. Delany, dreamily. "It's a mystery how it's done."

"And now tell me, pray, Mr. Grahame Browne, where you saw one of my buttons?" asked Marcella gaily. "I fancied they were quite unique."

"Here it is," he cried, taking a button from his waistcoat pocket. "I carry it with me everywhere, as a talisman—hoping, believing that it will bring me good luck."

"Oh!" laughed Marcella. "That is the way I used to talk about the ghost-chest. I could not carry it about—quite," arching her dainty eyebrows, "but I used to gaze at it, and tap it, and it fell and burst open and never brought me any good luck at all."

"Yet it gave you those buttons."

"True. But"—merrily—"that was indeed a small matter. And since you have one the same, they can not be so very uncommon. Yes," looking closely at the button, that he held up to her, between his finger and thumb, "it is just like mine—the straight, plain cross, with the shamrock in the middle. Where did you get it?"

"Where you got yours—in the old ghost-chest. It must have got hidden among the straw. Anyway, you did not see it, and left it for me."

"So that, without knowing it, I have shared my good luck with you. That is, if good luck it be."

"It is, indeed," earnestly. "Since it has been the means of making me know you and my mother's dear friend, Mrs. Delany."

"I am glad to have met you," Marcella said impulsively, and putting her hand in his. "I once thought I hated you. But I don't." And with a sudden upward glance, "I'll be so pleased if you'll tell me more about dear old Knockmarroon and all the people there."

* * * * *

Knockmarroon was ablaze with light—the soft, mellow light of myriads of wax candles. The house was full of visitors, and yet all was still, and the big rooms empty and deserted, as Marcella, radiantly lovely, in a flowing robe of white chiffon, a single string of pearls around her slender throat, a warm rose tint in her cheeks, the light of happy expectancy in her clear blue eyes, tripped noiselessly down the wide staircase, rejoicing in the thought that she would have a quiet half hour all alone while Mrs. Grahame Browne's other guests were dressing for dinner.

"It's perfect, quite perfect," escaped her, as she stood at the foot of the stairs and gazed around her in delight. "Like, and yet unlike, what I expected. The old things are here—but are different. Lionel is a magician. Everything he touches seems beautified. Even I am not the same since that day, nearly ten months ago, when I first met him at the Horse Show. All my old ideas are changed or softened. Instead of being angry with him for having bought old Knockmarroon, I'm positively glad that he has done so. I'd rather "—with a soft laugh—"far rather he had it than any one else—even myself. There's no one, not even a Blake, could keep the dear house and place as he does."

In the long gallery Marcella suddenly found herself face to face with the old ghost-chest, and she paused before it in rapture, her hands clasped, her lips parted in a bright, happy smile.

"The dear old thing! Honored as it should be, at last." And, then, with a soft little sigh, she fell into a deep and absorbing reverie.

Little more than twelve months had passed since Marcella, sad and disheartened, had left her beloved home and accompanied her aunt to Dublin. For some time she had gone out and about to please dear Mrs. Delany, who had done so much for her. She

had laughed and talked and danced, though her heart ached, and the admiration and kindness of friends and acquaintances, though pleasant, and, up to a certain point, consoling, did not turn her thoughts away entirely from the tender and sad recollections of bygone days, when she led a free and happy life in beautiful and beloved Knockmarroon. Then fate, in a strange and unexpected manner, made her acquainted with Lionel Grahame Browne, the man she had vowed to hate and detest, the wealthy parvenu who had bought her old home, and everything it contained, just as it stood. The purchase money had paid her father's debts and freed her from a considerable amount of care. And yet such was the folly and ingratitude of her loving but rebellious heart that she looked upon the purchaser as her greatest enemy on earth, and would have done anything to escape meeting him or speaking to him. On being introduced, Lionel's frank glance and winning smile disarmed her, and, to her own intense surprise, at their very first interview she spoke to him as to a friend. After that the world was changed; a subtle and wonderful happiness stole into her life. The thought of a stranger at Knockmarroon no longer troubled her. Her heart was at rest, her spirit full of joy. And when Mrs. Grahame Browne invited her and her aunt to join her house-party and spend Christmas in her old home, the girl gladly accepted her invitation, and went there with eager delight.

Absorbed in thought, on this, her first visit to the gallery, Marcella stood, one little hand laid lovingly upon the old stone coffin, now resting as upon a throne, on strong supports draped with crimson plush.

"A treasure among treasures. The ghost-chest of Knockmarroon," said a printed card upon the plush, and as her eyes rested upon the inscription, Marcella broke into a soft and joyous laugh.

"The luck of the Blakes transferred, without regret, to Lionel Grahame Browne," she said aloud. "Such it should be—" She stopped short, blushing and confused, as her host appeared suddenly before her.

"Eavesdroppers do not generally hear good of themselves,"

he cried, gaily, as he gazed at her in delight. "Although I do not really deserve that name. You were too much engrossed in your thoughts about this old curiosity to notice any one or anything, and never heard me hurrying up the gallery. And, then —a most unusual and dangerous thing—you spoke aloud."

"Oh, I— It doesn't matter," she laughed, stepping back and sinking into a big arm-chair. "I—I really meant what I said. Without a shadow of regret, I see you master here, possessing and enjoying everything, luck included, that the Blakes"—her voice trembled—"once held dear. You have a soul to appreciate it all. And I—" a little sob escaped her—"am—content."

He looked at her, going closer to her side.

"Thank you. Your words are good, for I know that you speak truly. But they are not enough. I want more. I am greedy, you will say. But, even so— Oh, my love, my love!"—in a voice full of passionate feeling—"am I presumptuous? Do I hope too much? Is the one word I wish to hear from those sweet lips an impossible one for you to utter?"

She raised her head, her eyes shining and wet with gathering tears.

"One—word! Oh, Lionel, what is that?"

"An answer to the question that has been in my heart and on my lips for months, but which I did not dare to utter. Your sweet speech when you fancied yourself alone has given me courage. Marcella, beloved, will you be my wife? Whisper but one little word and make me the happiest man on earth."

"Yes." It was but a single word, but it was enough. Lionel desired no more. "My darling!" he cried. "This is bliss. My happiness is too great for words. My good fortune in winning you fills me with wonder and delight."

Marcella laughed and laid her hand upon the old stone coffin.

"And I pray thee," she said gaily, "don't forget that to this dear thing we owe our happiness."

"True, sweetheart," laying his hand on hers. "Without it we should never have met. I certainly owe everything I prize most in this world to the ghost-chest of Knockmarroon."

IN MÈRE CLICHY'S GARDEN.

BY MARY F. NIXON-ROULET.

It was raining, but Natalie Gray never let a little rain interfere with early church on the first Friday. She gathered her skirts closely about her, raised her umbrella, and pattered down the stone-flagged street. Just as she passed beyond the quaint archway which separated new from old Dijon, she noticed that there were more people coming from the direction of the church than were going toward it, and fearing lest the Mass be over, she quickened her steps. Two old women stopped to glance curiously at her. The ways of *les Americaines* were so droll! About alone in all weathers they went, even the *jeunes filles,* and no harm seemed to come of it. For a French demoiselle to behave so—well, it was not to be thought of.

Natalie was quite unconscious of these criticisms. She was thinking of other things: of whether she could reach St. Benigne in time, and most of all, of what she should do with a gold piece which was burning a hole in her pocket-book. Gold pieces were by no means common with this slender, dark-haired girl. She was an orphan, earning a none too pleasant livelihood as governess to a family of children whose parents' money had not succeeded in buying good manners, sweetness, or any of the best gifts of life for their offspring. Natalie felt her position the more since the Grays came of a long line of ancestry, nobly born, and on her mother's side she was a d'Evremont, one of the French *noblesse,* the old chateau and chapel still standing near Paris.

She had longed to come to France, her mother's country, and her pretty manners and French accent had been a recommendation to the rather coarse-grained Chicago woman who engaged her

as "companion and governess," for her four children, all under twelve.

"She is not an expensive luxury," said Mrs. Galloway. "Mlle. Francine cost twice what Miss Gray will charge. Her French is perfect, I am told, and she says she can mend lace—which will be a boon to me, for my maid won't do it."

"I wish she could teach some manners to those young cubs of ours," said Mr. Galloway. Although in pork, and ill-educated save in a shrewd business way, he had keener perceptions than his purse-proud wife, and, like the typical American father, wished his children to be all he was not. "Is not Miss Gray a Catholic?" he asked.

"Yes," his wife replied. "But what do we care? She asked to go to church every Sunday, but said she'd go early. It's quite convenient. That Lutheran governess I had turned the house upside down to get to her 'meeting,' which took place at the same hour with the fashionable church services. Only fancy it! I shan't mind Miss Gray's going to church at all, if she goes before we're up."

So it had been settled, and Natalie had spent a not unhappy year in Europe. Her young charges grew to love her, because she was gentle and kind as well as firm; and although she seemed very cross at times, Mrs. Galloway was far more civil to Miss Gray than she had ever been to other incumbents. So marked had been the children's improvement that their taciturn father noticed it, and the evening before this first Friday he had called the young governess to him and said:

"The children tell me that to-morrow is your birthday, Miss Gray. I want you to take this and get yourself some trifle in memory of Dijon. Spend it as you like, only give yourself something pleasant to take away with you." When she would have thanked him, tears in her eyes at the unexpected kindness, he waved her away and would not listen.

A twenty franc piece—five whole dollars to squander—it was bliss untold!

"I'm so tired of buying only useful things!" she thought.

"This is for something pretty, to make a pleasant memory of Dijon. What shall I get? I know—one of those exquisite water-color sketches—a picture lasts always, and whenever I look at it I shall remember my birthday, Mr. Galloway's kindness, dear, quaint, beautiful Dijon, a bit of *ma belle France,* and this happy first Friday morning."

So, having settled in her own mind that she would buy the picture on the way back from church, she thought no more about it, but raised to the cloudy skies a face so bright and happy that the passer-by must needs notice it, by very force of contrast to the weather. An old man walking behind her caught her smile, and sighed a little. Youth and happiness were good gifts he had left behind upon the road of life. This young girl seemed to have both, he thought, and he watched her curiously as he followed her to church.

Soon the simple, beautiful service was over, and soothed and cheered by the blessings of confession and communion—in company with a few white-capped peasants and the old gentleman of the white beard—Natalie hurried toward the hotel. She would have lots of time to procure her picture, she thought, and stopped before the little shop window to decide which one she wanted. They were all pretty, simple little things, bits of scenery here and there in historic Dijon, but painted with a delicacy of touch and a keen artistic sense of the salient points, which made them uncommonly good. Twenty francs each they were marked, and she hesitated long before she could make up her mind. At last she decided. The scene lay between a corner of the old ruined wall, Dijon's fortifications so many years before, and a corner of a walled garden, with a church spire looming up beyond, tall and white against the brilliant blue sky. This last appealed to her most of all, and she said to herself: "It will remind me of dear old St. Benigne—the quaintest church in France. I will get it," she added aloud, and turned to enter the shop.

"Mademoiselle," said a hesitating voice, and looking quickly up, she saw the old man of the white beard who had been at Mass with her.

"Monsieur?" she said inquiringly.

"You dropped your handkerchief," said the stranger. Then, as she thanked him prettily, he added,

"You like the pictures?"

"Oh, so much!" she cried. "That bit of a garden is charming. I can see the poppies nod, and smell the pinks. I would give anything to see it! Is it here in Dijon?"

The old man smiled, and his smile lighted up the worn face until he looked almost saintlike, so benign was he.

"It is my garden," he said simply. "I live at Numero Quatre, Rue le Duc. Will Mademoiselle step thither and see my flowers? The rain has ceased, and my wife will welcome you."

"I should love to," said the girl. She was unaccountably drawn to this gentle-voiced old stranger. "You are very kind, Monsieur. But first I must buy my picture."

"Wait until you have seen the garden itself; you can then tell better if the painting is good," said he, and smiling she followed him to his little abode. It was a quaint little house, the gable window, full of vines, hanging far out over the street, a dark little glove shop in the front room, tended by a trim old lady in sabots, blue frock, and spotless cap. Madame Clichy was, apparently, of a lower social grade than her husband, but the old couple were devoted to each other and made a pretty picture as they trotted about the garden, showing off their favorite flowers, and the red-breasted piping bullfinch who sang so entrancingly in his cage.

"I must go," cried Natalie at last, her hands laden with the flowers which the hospitable souls had thrust upon her. "I fear I am too late now to get my picture, and perhaps it will be gone by night. But I've had the loveliest time, Madame, and I thank you and Monsieur so much for your kindness. Au revoir—for I will try to come to see you again before we leave Dijon."

Monsieur Clichy had been talking earnestly with his wife, and at Natalie's words he stepped forward.

"Mademoiselle," he said eagerly, "let me get the picture and bring it to your hotel." Then, as Natalie hesitated, he said,

"There was no especial reason why you wanted to go to the shop yourself, was there?"

"Certainly not," she said, puzzled. "I wished only to make sure of the picture. Some one else may perhaps get it before I do, and since I have seen the original scene, this lovely garden of yours, I want it more than ever."

"Then I will bring it to you this afternoon after *dejeuner*," he said, but the old lady interrupted:

"Speak not in riddles, Jean. Tell the young lady all. She has a kind heart; that is written on her face. She will gladly do all you wish."

Thus adjured, the old man said:

"It is like this, Mademoiselle. The artist of the picture is our lodger. His room is there, where the vines enclose the window, and he is ill. Not very ill, but worn out with too much work, for which he has too little pay. For the pictures which he places in the shop for sale, he receives but half the price. And so I thought if I took it from the shop and you bought it from me, he could have all the twenty francs instead of ten."

"But—yes—why, of course!" cried Natalie. "I am glad you told me, and if I can possibly sell more of his pictures, I will do so. Bring the painting to me at the Hotel of the Swan, at three o'clock. I can be free then. Ask for Mademoiselle Gray—here is my card," and she gave him a bit of pasteboard upon which was engraved her full name: "Miss Natalie d'Evremont Gray."

"Now I must hurry home, or my employers will be wondering what has become of me. I hope your lodger will soon be well. He paints so beautifully!" and with a gay "Adieu," she hurried away, not noticing the face at the little gable window, or the eyes which eagerly followed her.

Monsieur Clichy brought the painting as he had promised, and Natalie paid him joyously, glad that her precious gold piece was to bring pleasure to others besides herself. As she took it to her room she passed Mr. Galloway, and, seized by a sudden impulse, she stopped to show it to him.

"Is it not beautiful?" she asked, timidly. "Please let me thank you, sir, for enabling me to carry away this lovely bit of Dijon."

"It is a pretty thing," said Mr. Galloway. "I like those homelike scenes. I would not mind getting some to carry back with me."

"Oh, wouldn't you, really?" cried Natalie, bold for another when she could never have been so for herself, and, how she scarcely knew, she found herself pouring out all the story of the young artist, poor and ill, and the good old couple who had befriended him. So well did she tell her story that Mr. Galloway was amused and interested.

"Bring one of the children and take me to see this friend of yours, Miss Gray," he said with kindly peremptoriness. "I do not care for guide-book sights, but I like people."

So they went to Monsieur Clichy's garden, and found the young painter—a tall, dark fellow, with a pale, high-bred face. Natalie and her young charge wandered among the flowers, while the two gentlemen discussed business, and when he rose to go Mr. Galloway said, in response to the young man's grateful speech:

"You must thank Miss Gray, since it was she who brought me here."

"A thousand thanks, Mademoiselle," said the young man eagerly. "We have the same name; can it be that we are kinfolk?"

"Your name?" Natalie paused.

"I am Raoul d'Evremont," he said simply. "My people are of the younger branch of the old house."

"My mother was of the elder line," said Natalie. "Can it be that we are cousins?"

"Not cousins, but we are kin, certainly," he answered, "though in a remote degree," and they walked slowly through the garden, as he told her of the old family chateau at Passy and of her French relatives.

"Mère Clichy here is my old *bonne,*" said Raoul. "That is

why she and her good husband take an interest in so graceless a fellow as myself. When may I see you again, Mademoiselle?"

"I know not, Monsieur," said the soft voice. "We leave Dijon to-morrow. This is good-by."

"Not so. Your Mr. Galloway has given me orders which it will take me a month to fill, and then I am to go to meet him in Paris, thence to Chicago, to decorate all his mansion. It is to you I owe this good fortune. You are my good angel, Mademoiselle. Au revoir then, not good-by."

"Au revoir, Monsieur," said Natalie quietly; but her heart beat strangely at the look in his eyes, and his hand held her for a second in a firm, warm grasp.

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One of the finest pictures in the Paris *Salon,* two years later, was signed "d'Evremont," and was a homely scene of a little French garden. Above its walls a quaint church spire gleamed heavenward, and amid the poppies and the pinks was the slender figure of a girl, happiness written upon her face, joy within the beautiful eyes which looked across Mère Clichy's garden.

LUIGI OF THE BELLS.

BY MARY BOYLE O'REILLY.

We sat in a gondola which floated on the Grand Canal, moored to one of the tall painted posts that are anchored before the water-gates of palaces in Venice. Down the great waterway wound a long procession of gondolas filled with local celebrities and visiting notabilities. The air was resonant with the crash of brazen instruments and the sound of many voices. Gay flags and carpets hung from marble balconies, and the brilliant flowers of the south were tossed in iridescent showers from boat to boat. The gondoliers, resplendent in their summer uniforms of white with blue or scarlet neck scarfs and sashes, stood each on the poop of his frail craft, watching the gay scene with a calmness bred of familiarity. Suddenly every gondolier raised his oar and his cap in salute, and his voice in a shout which echoed and re-echoed across the tranquil waters that washed the palace walls. Visitors turned eagerly to find out who could rouse such enthusiasm in men lately so phlegmatic. They saw, seated in an antique but handsome gondola, wrapped in a well worn cloak, his gray head uncovered, and tears streaming down his cheeks, an old gondolier.

"It is Luigi, Signora, Luigi of the Bells. You do not know of him? Ah! Yes, if the Signora permits I will rest here. The Signora is very kind. It will be an hour before the procession returns—we do well to remain here. But not to know Luigi! The Signora is indeed a stranger to Venice. He is first of the gondoliers, owner, as you see, of the handsomest gondola in Venice. That came afterward, when he was called Luigi of the Bells. The boat is too old for use now, but always the son of Luigi rows his father to the festa. If the Signora permits

I tell the story as I had it of my father, who is with God this ten years. The Signora will understand that Luigi is very old.

"Time was when Luigi was a gondolier—poor, *ma!* so poor, but hoping always that some day he would own a gondola. No king is more content than the gondolier who owns his boat in Venice. Luigi had saved his earnings for years, lira by lira. It was a good season. Venice was filled with visitors as it might not be again for a decade. The boatmen were busy and happy. Luigi was to be married on All Saints' Day, and he made plans to hire a new house when he had got the gondola, his old house being unsafe by reason of the shifting sand bar on which it stood. Often in the flood tide he expected to have the tottering walls tumble about his ears. It was the feast of St. John, and all Venice went down to Murano for the water sports. Never had such a fleet of barks and gondolas left the Basin of St. Mark. Luigi had not bought his boat and could not hire one. He was fishing off the sea wall of the arsenal, thinking of the new boat, and the new wife and the new house he would have by next St. John's Day, when he saw a small black cloud far off beyond the Lido.*

"One minute it seemed such a little cloud, not larger than an oar's blade, and the next it had grown as high as the red tower of St. George. Then he knew that the scirocco had come upon Venice during a full moon, the disaster that—by the mercy of God—sweeps in from the sea but once in a man's lifetime. In the distance, across the north lagoon, he could see a long brown shadow on the horizon. That was the fleet of pleasure boats at the water sports; hundreds, yes, thousands of frail gondolas, filled with happy people. A darkness as of night spread like a vast curtain over the lagoon. Luigi climbed to the top of the sea-wall and raked together all the rubbish he could find. The little beacon fire he tried to kindle was soon scattered by a puff of hot wind. Next moment the fiery gusts of the scirocco were blowing in from the sea.

* The natural breakwater of sand bars which protects the lagoons about Venice from the wash of the Adriatic.

"Darker it grew, and darker, and in the darkness Luigi prayed a prayer to the Black Madonna of St. Mark's that she would give him light to save the people afloat on the lagoon. And she who never fails gave to Luigi a great thought. With a bound he cleared the wall and ran through the empty streets. In the darkness he found the bridges as only a Venetian can. On reaching his home campo the sudden thought came to him of his unsafe house, and the money for the brand new gondola he had worked so many years to earn. The thought was so bitter that he groaned aloud as he ran. But he did not turn back. Consider, Signora, what that money meant to Luigi. When he gained the Piazza he could hear the roar of the angry Adriatic on the Lido, and the swish-swash of a wind-driven tide in the Grand Canal. Then something cold and wet swept across his feet. *The Piazza was flooded!* The water was up to his knees before he had waded to the door of the bell tower. Weary and breathless he climbed to the little chamber under the bells. As he rested against the window-bars he could see that great wracks of low-flying clouds, driven by the screaming wind, hid the harbor lights which the darkness would not have concealed. Then Luigi felt for the bell ropes, and the Black Madonna of St. Mark's strengthened his arm. The peal, feeble at first and broken, grew stronger, until St. Peter and St. Paul, St. Luke and St. John, called from the bell tower showing the way toward home. Last, with a mighty boom, great St. Mark, the bell that is only rung on the first feasts, rang out 'Home! Home! Home!' Above the wind and the tide they heard it, in distant Mestre on the mainland, and far off on the lagoon. The terror-stricken people, listening in the blackness, knew what was calling them to safety, and turning to the sound rowed toward the voices of the bells.

"At the foot of the bell tower a group of gondoliers stood knee-deep in the water listening to the chime. 'It is a spirit,' they said one to the other, 'no one man in Venice is strong enough to toll the bells.' And the weeping women crowded in the doorways of St. Mark's whispered, 'It is a spirit.'

"So no man climbed the bell tower, while the bells kept call-

ing, calling, till a weird, red sunset lightened the murky gloom and the crippled fleet, wave-battered but safe, rowed heavily back to the canals.

"'We owe our lives to the bells,' cried the frightened people. 'In the midst of the scirocco we heard them calling, calling. A thousand blessings rest upon the bells. Let ringers chime a peal of praise for our safety.' When, at last, the ringers climbed the bell tower they found Luigi. With his hands still on the ropes he was looking down at the crowded boats in the Guidecca. When they told him that the fleet was saved he smiled, but he did not hear. Never since that day has he heard a human voice, but when the chime is tolling he likes to face the tower. They say that he can hear the voices of the bells.

"That is the story, Signora, the story of how Luigi came by the name he bears. The people he had saved gave him the gondola you saw, the handsomest boat of its day on the canals, and they made him chief of the gondoliers. That was long ago, Signora, and now the old man lives from year to year enjoying the pleasant thought that on St. John's Day he will be rowed down the Grand Canal before all the people, and we gondoliers will tell visitors like you, Signora, how he came to be called 'Luigi of the Bells.'"

A DAUGHTER OF DUTY.

BY ALICE RICHARDSON.

SABINA BANTING'S heart was troubled; nay, it was sick unto despair. She had fought bravely with herself to show no yielding, but to-day she was almost crushed. The little cabin where she and her grandmother lived was but a few miles from Valley Forge, and what she had seen at that dismal spot for months past had almost killed her girlish hopefulness, and were she of weaker spirit, she would have been made hard and cynical and an infidel. She had seen her neighbors and her friends, yes, and her own flesh and blood, during that dreadful winter of '77, sleeping in the snow, and dying for want of the pitiful comfort of a bed of straw! She had seen brave, stalwart men, thrilling with abundant life, shrink into weak, gaunt creatures for want of food! She had seen their bruised, bleeding feet, and their tattered garments, and she marveled at their endurance and patient hope. Day after day she had visited the camp, and her cheering presence, her thoughtful acts and unselfish helpfulness had made many a homesick soldier, faint in body and sore in heart, put off until to-morrow his total surrender to Despair.

Little by little her simple home had given what it held of comfort for the suffering men, but now there was nothing more that its barrenness might yield. The cold, dreary day was almost gone. The fire smoldered and smoked in the fireplace, as if it, too, had caught the despair that sought admittance at the door. The crockery on the dresser shelves looked cold and dejected, and in a corner of the cheerless kitchen sat Sabina's grandmother, with hopelessness and sorrow showing in every fur-

row on her face and in her patient, folded hands. A branch of a shivering tree beat monotonously against the window pane and added to the general gloom. The wind cried and moaned through the forest that encircled the cabin, and everything betokened woe.

The tears were trying to force themselves from the eyes of the yet unconquered girl, but she persistently forced them back. They as persistently sought for mastery, when suddenly she opened the door and passed out into the dreary forest. In it was a tree which had once been razed by a storm, but its roots had yet retained their hold, and year by year, though part of the stricken tree was dead, it still preserved sufficient life and courage to put forth new leaves and blossoms, undaunted by an adverse fate. One of its branches stood erect, seeming to say to the more favored trees about it, "Crushed we may be, but conquered we are not!"

This tree was Sabina's oratory, whither she always went when despairing thoughts assailed her; and whether it was the silent lesson of the valiant tree, the quiet restfulness of the place, or the prayer that her aching heart gave voice to, that always helped her, she had never asked herself or thought, but refreshed and strengthened she had always been.

As she now approached it, she saw that the heavy wind of the day had crashed off a decaying branch. She stepped closer, and was gladdened by what she saw. Down in a hollow, exposed by the breaking, lay heaps of nuts, hickory, and walnuts, and chestnuts, gathered and stored by prudent squirrels. "The soldiers," she thought gleefully, "how delighted they will be!" For after that long winter of famine, even nuts were an unwonted luxury.

She hastily gathered them into her apron, and putting her arm about the upright branch of the beloved tree, kissed its puckered surface with the affection that she might give to a cherished friend, and with a childish pleasure that she had not felt for months, returned to the cabin.

"See, grandmother," she called joyfully, "what I have here for the soldiers!" She proudly held the apron out to show its

treasure, then stepped to the table and began filling a pan and mugs which stood there.

She had just finished when a loud rap at the door sent the blood back to her heart with a sickening fear. Her grandmother rose from her seat, but before she could place her hand upon the latch, the heavy, clumsy door was pushed open, and a French officer, Captain Ternant, an inspector of the American troops under Baron Von Steuben, entered the room. He was in full military dress, and carried a staff torn from a tree in the forest. His face was flushed, and his breath came in quick, short gasps, showing that he had been making unpleasant haste.

"Madam," he said, gravely bowing to the startled women, and addressing Sabina in English, "can you furnish me a horse? I have an important dispatch which I must deliver to General Washington at once, and I fear that I shall be captured if I go afoot."

The girl looked at him sadly. "No," she replied, "we have none."

The disappointed Captain pondered a moment, and spoke in a low tone as if to himself: "Is it safe to venture so?" Then he again addressed the girl: "I was dining with friends at Norristown when a message was brought to me that Howe will attack us to-night. I had but sewed the dispatch within my scapular and replaced it upon my neck when the house was attacked by five British soldiers. Fortunately I escaped into the woods unseen, I think, but without my horse." Again he seemed to forget her presence in his great anxiety. "This attack means sure defeat for the Americans," he said in a low tone. "Yes, I must go."

The moment he mentioned the nearness of their enemies, the grandmother threw the nuts into a bag, and lifting a board in the floor, dropped them out of sight. The officer again gravely bowed to the women and turned to the door, but was confronted by two British soldiers with leveled flintlocks, and Sabina heard the triumphant words:

"Surrender! You are our prisoner!"

His exultant captors led him into the room, quickly disarmed him, and began their search. They savagely tore off his shining top boots, looked carefully into them, and threw them aside. Then his military coat with its lace wrist ruffles was rudely torn from his body, but it gave up nothing to reward their search.

Sabina stood, terrified, watching the quick, impetuous movements of the soldiers. She had no idea of what a scapular was, but Captain Ternant had said that it was about his neck, and she feared that the precious message would be found. In her distress she prayed that God would help His struggling people. The soldiers in their increasing rage at finding nothing to repay them for their search, roughly clutched the prisoner's ruffled shirt and rent it from him. The frightened girl beheld the little brown shield. She trembled and clutched at the table, still with her gaze riveted upon the precious thing, whose import she did not understand. Its seizure might mean the death of her father and many of the other brave fellows at Valley Forge, all unconscious of their danger.

As the glance of one of the soldiers rested upon the scapular, which was somewhat faded and worn, he snatched it from the prisoner's neck, and threw it with a sneering oath toward the fireplace. The prisoner's face was rigid and white, but he stood motionless and silent, in the perfect self-control of a veteran soldier.

Sabina restrained the cry that rose to her lips as she saw the man tossing the scapular apparently into the fire. But fortunately it fell among the bordering ashes, unharmed by the coals a slight distance beyond. Her glance and the prisoner's met. In his, he entrusted to her the safe delivery of the message, and in an answering glance she accepted the sacred charge.

Finding their search in vain, after hastily looking through the cabin which had already been despoiled by the loyal, loving hands of Sabina and her grandmother, the soldiers, with their prisoner, went out into the gathering darkness, leaving the girl to face her heavy duty.

The way to the camp lay through the forest, somber and drear

enough by day, at night a spot where every bough became to the imagination of the traveler a British soldier or an uncanny specter. She trembled as she thought of it, but she had patriot blood in her veins, and she hastened to make ready for her awesome task. She hurriedly mended the broken scapular band, placed it upon her neck, muffled herself from the chilling dampness, and strengthened by her grandmother's "God guide you, child," passed into the shivering woods.

She was strong and agile, and moved quickly, in spite of the darkness and the beating wind. But as she hurried onward the dropping of a withered branch or the hooting of an owl tightened her heart and made her reel from fright. Still on and on she went, running, stumbling, panting, praying, hoping, despairing, every sound the noise of cannon, every shadow the lurking foe, her imagination filled with appalling pictures of her bleeding countrymen should Howe reach Valley Forge before her. In that time of agony she passed through the stern experience that comes to every one at some time in life,—an experience that tears away shams and conventionalities, and shows him as in a vision the awfulness, the reality, the sublimity of life.

On and on, and at last the clearing, and, blessed and unexpected sight, the camp still peaceful and orderly, and the sentinels calmly pacing to and fro. Her glad emotion expressed itself in a woman's way—tears, but she quickly brushed them away as she hastened to the guard tent and told her story.

She was taken at once to General Washington's dining cabin, where he, his wife, and a few officers were at supper. The furnishings of the rude little room, and the food as well, bespoke an austere frugality, but in striking contrast was a massive silver tea-urn upon the table.

The General rose from the table when she entered and hastily ripped open the precious brown square which she handed him. As he read the short message warning him that the dilatory, pleasure-loving Howe had at last roused himself and was about to strike that night, his face became stern and imperious-looking. His eyes flashed, he seemed to grow taller and more majestic-

looking in his bearing. He was, indeed, the dauntless commander-in-chief of the invincible American army. He gave a few concise directions to the officers who were waiting, alert, while he read, and they immediately left. A few minutes later he was in the saddle directing the hastily aroused troops.

But before following the officers from the room he turned to the girl. He was at that moment the courtly gentleman, the gracious host. He placed his warm, fatherly hand upon her damp shoulder, and looking into her face with his calm, true gaze, said earnestly: "Child, you do not realize the worth of your brave deed. May God fittingly reward you for it." Then his face brightened with genial thoughts, he led her to the table, seated her in his own abruptly-vacated chair, and said smilingly: "You must have a cup of Lady Washington's tea—a gift from the King of France."

A BROKEN ENGAGEMENT.

BY MAGDALEN ROCK.

"JEM KENNYON, of all men!" Edgar Mayfield ejaculated, delightedly. "Jem, old fellow, where did you spring from?"

Jem Kennyon laughed. His friend's greeting recalled the days when they had been close chums at Stonyhurst.

"From the Hotel Metropole immediately. Previously from South Australia."

"You have been touring, I recollect. And now have you come home to settle down to a country squire's life?" Mayfield asked.

"Probably not; but I have no plans." The tone was somewhat dull.

"Not for to-day even?"

"No. I have been wandering aimlessly about. London is unaltered," Jem said.

"Then I'll tell you what. I'm at the Langham. Had to come up to town over some confounded law business. Dine with me, and we'll go afterward to the Haymarket. There's a play running there written by a friend of my wife's."

Jem agreed. The meeting between the two men had taken place not very far from the office occupied by Mr. Mayfield's lawyer, and that gentleman's thoughts were more occupied with his old friend than with his law business as he walked onward when the two parted.

"I'll see something of Jem, anyway," he said to himself. "Bertha would not welcome him at the Laurels on account of his treatment of Miss Courtney. I never could understand Jem behaving so badly in that affair. I suppose he must have felt that his action was shabby when he started out to travel round the globe.

I mustn't touch the subject of matrimony this evening or I'll blunder. Bertha says I always do."

Notwithstanding Mr. Mayfield's efforts to confine the after-dinner conversation to reminiscences of college days, the talk at length drifted to the subject he was anxious to avoid.

"And so you're married?" Jem said, after a pause.

Mr. Mayfield nodded.

"To any one I know?"

"Yes; Bertha Newcombe."

"Oh, Bertha! Bertha and I were very good friends once."

"We were married two years ago, and after a short wooing," Mr. Mayfield informed his friend; and then he made an effort to get back to Stonyhurst, but Jem was not so disposed.

"It was at the Newcombes' place that I met with the—" Jem paused for a word—"with the disappointment that sent me wandering from England."

"At Abbeyland?" Mr. Mayfield questioned doubtfully, and rather at a loss what to say.

"Yes. I was engaged to Marion Courtney at the time. You knew that?"

"Yes. I heard something—nothing definite, you know—of—of—"

"Of the engagement being broken off?" Jem put in.

"Yes. Of course Bertha didn't, nor does not understand—" Mr. Mayfield paused, and remembered that his wife insisted that Jem Kennyon had been very much to blame, even if she did not, as she admitted, understand the entire circumstances under which the engagement between Marion Courtney and Jem Kennyon had ended five years before.

"I dare say not. However, here are the facts. I need not say how I loved Marion."

Mr. Mayfield nodded.

"Well, we were engaged, and our marriage was to take place in the autumn. Marion had been staying at Abbeyland, and when Charlie Newcombe asked me to run down from town with him for a few days I gladly consented. We arrived unexpectedly, and

found the entire family, and Marion also, absent at a picnic, or something of that kind. Charlie left me in an apartment used by his sisters as a sort of workroom while he went to find out where the picnic was held. He had some intention of joining the party."

"Yes," Mr. Mayfield said, as Jem hesitated.

"I was idly turning over some magazines when the wind from an open window blew a few loose pages of note-paper from a writing-table across the floor. As I lifted the last sheet I saw it was partly covered with Marion's writing, and was intended for me. The opening words of the communication were a shock. I remember them too well. They were: 'Dear James—Since coming here I have learned that our engagement is a wretched mistake. You did not give me time to know my mind, and I mistook friendship for love. But now another has taught me that such a mistake must be righted. I know that you will agree to the canceling of this unfortunate engagement. I think I should say that it is Francis—' The letter broke off there. Possibly Marion had been interrupted while writing."

"Well?"

"Much to Charlie Newcombe's surprise, I insisted on returning to town. From there I sent Marion the letter that gave her the freedom she craved, and next day I left England."

Mr. Mayfield rubbed his head, a way he had when puzzled. When he spoke, however, it was to suggest they should set out for the theater.

"A Woman's Way" was by no means badly written; the principal characters in the play were taken by well-known actors and actresses, and the scenery and dresses were superb. Nevertheless, neither Jem Kennyon nor his companion gave it very close attention.

Mr. Mayfield was trying to reconcile his wife's certainly rather vague account of Jem's action over his engagement and Jem's own, while the latter was thinking of the past. Suddenly he was very effectually roused from his musings. A man was reading aloud the identical words in which Marion Courtney had

broken her engagement. He leaned forward in his seat, and heard the actor repeat some additional words.

"What does it mean?" he whispered to Mr. Mayfield. "Those were Marion's words."

"I don't know," his companion replied, when he took in the nature of the question. "Only—" Mr. Mayfield stopped, doubtful of his own wisdom, and wished his wife were near. Then he blurted out, "Miss Courtney is the author of the play."

"Miss Courtney! Is she not married?"

"She wasn't a week or two since."

"And she wrote this play? I remember she often said she could write one, but I never knew she attempted anything of the kind."

"'A Woman's Way' has been before the public for a length of time, but I never witnessed it before."

"Come away, Mayfield," Jem said, excitedly. "I may have made a mistake. Come somewhere where we can talk." And an hour later the two were still endeavoring to explain the coincidence.

"Did Marion write any portion of the play at Abbeyland, do you think?" Jem asked for the sixth time, and his friend shook his head. How should he know? He did know that it was while staying at Abbeyland that she learned that she had lost the greater part of her fortune.

"Her guardian absconded, or something," Mr. Mayfield explained. "I have heard Bertha say how quietly she took the news."

"Lost her fortune?"

"The greater part of it. However, she did not grieve over that misfortune; and she earns something by her writings, I believe."

At length the two separated for the night. Mr. Mayfield was afoot early next morning, and despatched a telegram to his wife. Her reply caused him to send a second message. Then, with what he fondly hoped was an impassive countenance, he sought Jem, and found him at luncheon.

"See here, Jem," he said. "I am going home this afternoon.

Come with me, and talk over old times with Bertha. She'll be delighted to see you."

Jem demurred.

"I won't take a refusal, old fellow—so there. You can return as soon as you please." And Jem consented to accompany his friend to the Laurels. He wondered a little at Mr. Mayfield's restlessness and very evident excitement as the train bore them southward, but his own affairs occupied his mind for the most part.

"There, there," Mr. Mayfield said impatiently, after he had peered from the door of the pretty village station-house, "never mind the luggage, Jem. One of the porters will see to it till the cart comes. Come along!" And passing his arm through Jem's, he led him to where a stylish landau was drawn up.

"I have brought an old friend with me, Miss Courtney," Mr. Mayfield said to the lady who occupied a seat in the vehicle. "You haven't forgotten Jem Kennyon?"

Jem took off his hat with mechanical politeness, and held forth his hand. He did not notice that Marion Courtney's voice shook as she murmured some conventional words, nor that the soft pink flush faded from her cheeks. Mr. Mayfield shoved him into the carriage.

"Please tell Bertha, Miss Courtney, that I have a message to deliver to Dr. Gray," that gentleman said.—"No, no, Tom"—to the coachman—"you needn't wait. I prefer walking home."

"And now," Mr. Mayfield said to himself, as the carriage moved away, "surely they can put everything straight during a five-mile drive."

Mr. Mayfield was not mistaken. His wife met him at the hall door.

"O Edgar, it was all a dreadful mistake. The letter Mr. Kennyon saw was a copy of one to be used in the play Marion was writing. She didn't wish any one to know she was attempting the like. Then she got Mr. Kennyon's letter, in which he merely said that the best thing he could do in the new state of affairs was to leave her free. Marion naturally thought he referred to her loss of fortune."

"And now?"

"Oh, it is all right, of course. I could hardly make any sense of your first telegram—"

"One can't explain much in a telegram," Mr. Mayfield put in, apologetically.

"And Marion wondered why I insisted that she should go to the station. And, Edgar, the wedding is to be almost immediately."

"They dread lest there should be another broken engagement, perhaps," Mr. Mayfield said, and laughed.

"THE SOGGARTH'S CURSE."

BY AGNES M. ROWE.

FAR out in the wilds of the west of Ireland, near the cliffs of Moher, is the spot where our story opens.

It was a neglected, desolate-looking old castle, one of stout gray stone; and, despite the rugged appearance of its grim towers and old-fashioned gables, inspired one with feelings of horror and awe rather than admiration.

A romantic-looking old pile indeed, with the ivy and creeping plants growing over it in wild confusion; yet, despite its venerable look, the fact that it had remained untenanted for over a century did not prepossess me in its favor.

I had already begun to picture to myself all sorts of horrors and tragedies having taken place there in bygone years, for it seems built to defy the storms of the broad Atlantic, which lashed the bottom of the cliff on which it reared its stately head. A more lonely or isolated place in winter it would be difficult to find; and one could well imagine that the man who built a house in such solitude was not one who courted the society of his fellow creatures.

My surmise proved correct, as the history of the house disclosed by our guide and driver showed.

He was a typical Irish Jarvey, and as the tale will, I think, sound better in his words than mine, I give it as it came from his lips, with only an occasional elimination of his rather strong brogue.

"Is it the history of the O'Donovans yer honor would like? Well, shure, they were the mighty folk entoirely, until, as with all

grate people and nations, they had their fall; an', like the divil himself, pride was at the bottom av it. There wasn't another family to equal them round the country-side; the Donovan of Moher he was called, until Lawrence O'Donovan, the miser and black sheep of the tribe, drew down the priest's curse upon himself an' his race. Arrah, but it's a terrible thing, yer honor, when the wrath of the Lord's anointed is turned against a man, for the world knows thin, that, no matther what they are or have, it all withers away like the leaves av autumn; every man's hand is turned against thim, and shure the grass grows green upon the doorstep from that day out.

"Well, bedad, to make a long story short, sor, this particular O'Donovan had one son, the pride an' the apple av his eye. Young Masther Desmond was indeed a strapping youth, no finer shot or oarsman in the west; an' as handsome and well-built a youth as one's eye could see in a day's walk.

"From the time av his wife's death, the old squire became a miser; gold was his hobby, his god, but in spite of this no expense was spared upon the young masther, nothing was too good for him; he was sent to the best schools abroad, and in every way fitted to adorn a grand position in life.

"People often wondered what the squire intended to do with his son, for, as far as they could see, the young man was not qualifying for any particular profession; but, on leaving college, seemed quite content to settle down as a country gentleman and enjoy the freedom of the life around him. Thus he spent his days in roaming the country, as careless and easy-going, yet as true-hearted and affectionate a gossoon as you could find.

"How long this state of things would have continued, it would be hard to be after saying. The squire did not seem to mind. He told himself that later on the bhoy would marry some young lady av his own station, and wid her fortune an' his own could easily afford to continue in the life he was leading, and keep on the estate. These were the O'Donovan's ideas for Desmond, but the latter's were very different.

"During his lonely rambles the young masther had become

acquainted wid a beautiful peasant girl, the daughter of a small farmer on the estate. Although of humble origin, Kathleen Bryant was an educated colleen; she had been taught by the old priest himself, and was now installed as mistress in his village school.

"It was not to be wondered at then, that, as Kathleen was the most beautiful as well as the most companionable girl in the district, a friendship between herself an' the young masther soon ripened into love. On the youth's side his first passion was as firmly rooted as you would expect in one of his passionate temperament, while the girl, once she found him in airnest and determined to wed her in spite of all, soon relinquished her own objections.

"They were married quietly at a neighboring church, and then returned and sought the good priest's intercession on their behalf. The worst had yet to be gone through, and finding that nothing could now be done to remedy the evil, the good pastor consented to try and reconcile the squire to this marriage of his son. Begorra, but here was the rub entoirely.

"Hasty and hot-tempered as he had ever known the O'Donovan to be, he was not prepared for the volley of rage and abuse poured on his devoted head upon this occasion. Shure, all the old man's pride was up in arms at the thought of receiving a peasant girl, as he termed her, into his family; there was the divil of a row, the old man raised the place an' swore if they married he would not give them bite or sup to save them from starvation. Father and son, therefore, parted in anger, the parent invoking all manner of curses upon the young bridegroom.

"Father Clancy did all in his power to promote peace between them, but finding that useless, obtained a post for the young man in one of the larger towns. Things had grown bad in Ireland about that time, the terrible scourge of famine and plague was stalking through the land, and many of the best families began to suffer, while the peasant farmer and all who had not a store laid by, soon felt its awful grip. Yerrah, yere honor, it was a sight to make strong men weep, and draw salt, scalding

tears from the hardest heart. Nothing had been heard about young Masther Desmond and his wife since their departure, and it was hoped they were doing well, for the inhabitants of Moher had good reason to bless the memory of their beloved and generous young master. They missed his cheery word and helping hand now, for the squire since that day had become more miserly than ever, a greater taskmaster, who seldom troubled more about his tenants than the receiving of their rents when due.

"Dark days had come upon the villagers themselves, when what was their surprise to find a sad-faced, worn-out poor craythur present herself in their midst and ask their hospitality. It was some time before they recognized in this forlorn specimen the blooming, happy bride who had left them but a few years previously.

"It was not for herself the young wife craved assistance, but for her husband, the once proud young aristocrat whom all loved. Hers was a sad story; not being brought up to any employment, the young man had found work hard to obtain; his tastes all lay in outdoor life, yet with no knowledge of farming this was useless. He had lost many situations; despite all his efforts, office work was uncongenial to him, and now bad health had followed on his heels. It was as if the hand of the Almighty, as well as the hearts of their neighbors, was turned agin them. It was but a sorry wreck of his former self that the poor villagers now invited into their humble cots, to share their own scanty meals and miserable beds.

"Kathleen had returned with her sick husband and their baby boy in hopes that a sight of their poverty would touch the heart of that proud old man, who accumulated both money and grain despite the fact that those around him were dying of famine. The peasants shook their heads at her proposal to appeal to the squire in person; they knew the O'Donovan better than she did, but they hoped that the ravages time and want had made in her girlish form might touch his heart. But stone itself might be moved to compassion before that black-hearted scoundrel, for as the song says, 'no marble could be colder.' With her little, half-fed

baby lying pressed against her breast, the young mother presented herself as a suppliant at the castle. But it wasn't in his hard, proud heart to forgive; and when the squire gazed upon that young mother and her half-starved offspring, and heard how his own flesh and blood was dying wid hunger, he only laughed in her face and told her as she and his son had made their bed so they must lie on it; he would not stretch out a hand to save either of them.

"So, heart-broken, but not yet despairing, Kathleen went back to the village, sure and firm in her belief that help must come soon, that it was not possible for her husband and the people to die of want, while his own father's coffers were full of gold and the granaries laden with beautiful ripe corn.

"Faith, time passed on and no change came. Things grew worse and worse; the people all around felt the terrible pinch of hunger. The old priest, as I was telling ye, did all he could for the young couple, but he was sore pressed himself, for the hand of affliction lay heavy on his little flock, and it was wid grief his riverence realized that all his efforts could not keep the wolf from the door.

"Misther Desmond grew worse as he saw the distress he had brought upon those he loved, an' at last it came to the sad pass when those around knew him to be dying av want an' starvation, and they powerless to help him.

"Then bedad it was the 'Soggarth Aroon' himself who went to visit the squire, and begged him for the love of God to make peace an' help his dying son. But it was the same answer the holy man got as the others had done before him. His riverence got angry, an' sez he, 'Lawrence O'Donovan, if the suffering of your own flesh and blood won't move your heart to pity, perhaps the cry of a whole village for food will. The people around, your own tenants, are dying wid hunger; your storehouses an' granaries are laden wid corn an' wheat. Now, in the name of heaven, sell me this on reasonable terms, and I will buy: the people must be fed.'

"But do ye think it was takin' any notice of the holy man

Larry ud be? Faith no, for he burst out wid the laughter and says:

"'Shure, it's wastin' yer time yer riverence is; for though I had three times the amount of corn that ye see with me, it is not one grain the people of Moher shall touch. I swear it shall all be emptied into the sea before they lay hands on it.'

"'Then,' answered the minister of God, 'I am sorry for you, O'Donovan. He who is the Father of the poor and the needy will know how to repay you for this day's work. No blessing will attend you, but the cry of the starving widow an' orphan cry out for vengeance against you at the judgment seat. I warn you also that the people know of your hoarded corn, an' a starving multitude is a formidable foe, a terrible and relentless enemy to cope wid; so I bid ye beware how you trifle with their outraged feelings. Remember your own acts, your deeds as well as theirs, will cry out to heaven against you, and I warn you to be prepared for the consequences of your rash folly. Your sin of greed and avarice, your unforgiving nature, the neglect of your own flesh and blood, will call down a terrible retribution upon your head.'

"That night with a heavy heart the pastor told his people how his own offers to purchase the grain had been refused, likewise their landlord's reply. Many a dry sob went up to heaven from breaking mothers' hearts as they learned the squire's decision; while the men went about with dark, determined, scowling faces, which boded little good to their tyrannical oppressor.

"Later when, as usual, the good priest visited the dying bed of the young masther, he saw that the poor fellow would not live much longer; an' havin' other sick calls to make, he went in search of some one to remain wid and console the young wife in her affliction. But though he entered a few cottages, they were all empty; only a few mites of childer or the very old people, were to be seen. A terrible suspicion rose in the priest's mind, and he made his way as quickly as possible toward the 'Big House.'

"While on his way, a roar like thunder was borne to his ear. Instinctively he knew what had happened; it was not the elements at war with each other. No, the night was beautifully fine and

calm; moonlight, pale and peaceful, flooded the landscape on every side, all nature was at rest. It was man, wretched man, who tyrannized over and were at war with each other. Again the sound reached his ear from the distance, and now only too well did he recognize it. The Soggarth Aroon gulped down the lump which rose in his throat, and dashed the tears away.

"It was the cry of hunger, the wail of little children, the moans an' shrieks of women, mingled with the oaths, threats, an' curses of excited, half-starved men, which fell upon his ear. The good man's heart stood still; he knew now that the climax had arrived, that these exasperated, famished people had taken the law into their own hands, and, priest though he was, he could not blame them.

"What he had warned the miser of had come to pass; the people had taken the first step toward being revenged upon him. Already a terrible fate might await this miserable, proud old tyrant. The village had risen, and were gathered round the miser's house. Father Clancy scarcely expected they would listen to his words or be led by him now. Once their eager, hungry eyes beheld the warehouses stored with grain, he could not expect they would depart still hungry.

"No pity for the loss likely to be sustained by that miserable man, whose whole creed was love of wealth and gain, entered his heart; but he feared that if the squire resisted their demands for food, the people might set upon him, and in their present rage and excited condition, scarcely be responsible for their actions. It was his duty as their pastor to be near them, and though he could not, perhaps, save the miser's house from being wrecked, his presence might, at least, restrain them from unnecessary violence.

"Hastening forward, a strange sight met his gaze. A short way up the side of the hill on which the house stood, was the mansion, somber-gray and stately as usual; the same house which for ages past had been revered and its masters loved and looked up to by the tenants. The time had passed now when the O'Donovan was the pride of his tenants, the friend and chief to whom all owed an' gave cheerful allegiance. Instead the people clamored

for bread, and in place of food this man who throve and fattened upon their hard earnings, offered them a stone.

"As their beloved soggarth drew near, a hush fell upon the maddened throng; a cry of, 'here is his riverence!' arose; and strong, rough men moved respectfully aside to let him pass. Father Clancy was but a small man, yet the moment his voice rang out, the people were all attention; they listened to his pleading to return to their homes an' do no violence, but already their minds were made up. They had been patient too long; it was bread for their families they wanted an' were now determined to have.

"Before the pastor could again plead with them, a window of the house was raised, and the figure of a man appeared. It was the squire.

"'Why do you seek me at this late hour? What do you want?' he demanded, harshly.

"'Bread—food for our wives and little ones. That is what has brought us here an' well you know it, O'Donovan,' was the answer.

"'Then your demands will not be satisfied. Storm the place, wreck the house if you will, but not one ounce of corn will you receive. Starve, die of hunger like rats, it is nothing to me; I hate you—hate all mankind. I have grain, and intend to keep it; none of it will you touch. Now do your worst—I defy you!'

"With these words, followed by a horrid, jeering, almost demoniacal laugh, the wretched man disappeared from view.

"'To the granaries! We have been balked long enough,' was the universal cry.

"Begorra, yer honor, it was a grate sight entoirely to see that rush of determined people. Unheeding the voice of their pastor, who still pleaded with them, they made for the storehouses at the end of the grounds. These the squire had built purposely; the back of them looked on to the sea, and in calm weather he was able to dispose of his whole cargo of corn to any vessel.

"When the crowd caught sight of the much-coveted grain, they became frenzied; the nose was deafening, for mingled with the cries of delight from women and children was the impatient

oaths of infuriated men whose heavy blows resounded on the barn doors in their wild endeavor to break them in.

"The tumult again brought the strange old man to the window, but instead of moving him to pity, the sight of their struggles seemed only to harden him the more. 'Fools! fools!' he cried shrilly. 'You think you will conquer, but you have little to gain, for rather than one ear of corn should fall into your hands I will destroy it myself.'

"Another wild laugh burst from him, an' again he was lost to view. For a second only his strange words affected his hearers; the next they laughed his threat to scorn. Faith, if ever men worked before, those poor famished creatures did then to gain the prize that was almost at hand. There was a loud creak, followed by a succession of groans; the big doors were yielding at last, and the knowledge lent new strength to the workers' arms. It was coming at last. No longer would the little ones' cry for bread remain unanswered; their famished, half-starved mothers as well as themselves, would soon have plenty to eat.

"It was here, now, almost within their grasp. One more united effort, a push altogether, and the work would be accomplished. The crowd was breathless, the suspense terrible; they could scarcely realize what they sought was so near at hand.

"Suddenly there was a loud crash; for one moment only a terrible, an ominous silence ensued, then a cloud of dust filled the air as the shattered doors gave way, and splinters of wood flew in all directions. This was followed by a roar of triumph, as the eager crowd pressed forward to secure their prize.

"But why that sudden halt, why did they in front stand staring, as if petrified? All too soon those behind learned the appalling truth. The corn, that beautiful golden grain, lay revealed in plenty before their famished eyes; yet it was disappearing from view, sinking—sinking into space even as they watched. The back of the building was removed, and the food of thousands vanishing before their very eyes, being hurled by their villainous tormentor into the sea. The majority stood like dazed beings, incapable of understanding the phenomenon they witnessed; those

who did understand, too horrified by this new calamity to be capable of action.

"Was this corn bewitched, had the evil eye been placed upon it, or what? The beautiful golden grain was slowly but surely diminishing before their gaze an' they powerless to prevent it. Had the ground opened to receive and swallow up their treasure; was this a landslide or earthquake? Was even heaven against them, the wretched people wondered.

"Even as they looked on in dumb agony, for this new shock was more than their strength could bear, a shrill cry of delight was borne to their ears.

"'Ha, ha, ha! I told you so. I said not one ear of my corn should you touch. I threatened to cast it all into the sea and I have kept my word. Save it now. Help yourselves, my good people, help yourselves.'

"The eyes of the hungry crowd were raised, and rested upon the O'Donovan, who had once more taken his stand by the window. A strange, weird picture the old man made as the peaceful moonlight streamed about his gaunt form and gray hairs. The sneer upon his thin lips sent a thrill of loathing through his hearers.

"Suddenly another cry was wafted upon the breeze. The crowd heard it, an' so did that strange old man who stood by mocking their misery. As the melancholy wail reached his ear, his face for a moment lost its hard, cunning expression, an' he leaned forward to see whence it proceeded.

"Bearing down upon the people with almost the fleetness of the mountain deer, could be seen the figure of a woman. Her long black hair had become loose and was streaming down her back and shoulders, or floated on the breeze. Her garments fluttered about her slight figure as it swayed to and fro in her anxiety to reach the spot.

"'It is Kathleen, poor Desmond's wife, come to make another appeal to the squire; perhaps the craythur will move him this time,' the people murmured, as they fell back to allow that girlish suppliant to pass between them. For the moment their own ter-

rible grievance was forgotten; they hoped against hope that her petition might yet win where force had not succeeded.

"Looking neither to the right nor left Kathleen kept on, her eyes seeming to be glued to that face which gazed coldly down upon her from above. When just beneath the casement she halted, and throwing out her hands imploringly, cried:

"'Bread, bread! For the love of heaven give him bread; save him, your only son!'

"As though fascinated the old man stared fixedly at her, but not a muscle of his hard features relaxed as he hissed rather than spoke the words, 'Never! he is no son of mine; woman, you plead in vain.'

"A terrible cry of anguish and despair, like unto that uttered by a lost soul, burst from the girl's white lips.

"'God! he is lost! too late, too late! Desmond, Desmond! why did you leave me? If you had stayed a little longer I might have saved you. The corn is here, they tell me. I shall get some, and neither you nor the boy will be hungry again. Darling, we shall have plenty of food soon. It is here in abundance—all your own by right, too. Desmond, my own, my husband, I come, I come!'

"She sprang forward as she spoke, and with the fleetness of a bird gained the entrance of the barn before the onlookers could realize his intention. Suddenly her face changed, the light of madness burned in the beautiful eyes, and throwing her hands wildly above her head, she leaped into the midst of that disappearing corn; all the horrified spectators could see was a dark speck among the golden grain as both were washed away into the depths of the pitiless sea.

"On the instant many of those honest fellows rushed into the water in hopes of rescuing her, but that was impossible; the girlish figure had become imbedded in the mass of loose corn, an' it was some time before the boatmen found the lifeless form floating on the still surface of the water. When at last the sad procession bore the remains of poor Kathleen into their midst, there was not a dry eye to be found.

"Tenderly those rough hands carried her, an', as if retribution demanded it should be so, placed the corpse on the sloping lawn right under the window of the old miser's room. Gently they uncovered the face, and calm as though she but slept, was the pale, beautiful countenance which bore no longer the pinched, wan look of hunger; peace, perfect peace had settled on the young wife's features.

"Father Clancy came forward, and knelt beside the body in prayer, while the assembled crowd stood by in silent grief, too choked to utter a word, but from those heaving bosoms an' tearful eyes many a silent supplication went forth.

"O'Donovan himself had not moved from his lonely vigil during all this time; like some weird ghoul or skeleton he had witnessed the terrible tragedy, an' now like one paralyzed stood gazing down upon the features of his girlish victim; the daughter-in-law whom he had driven to death, his only son's wife.

"As the Soggarth Aroon rose from the side of the corpse, a silence fell upon the crowd; even the women stifled their sobs as they saw he was about to speak.

"A terrible look of agony passed over the good priest's face as he turned, and, in a voice so loud and vehement that he was distinctly heard by all around, addressed the author of all this misery.

"Lawrence O'Donovan, you see before you the terrible an' awful effects of your sin of greed and hoarded wealth. Money was your god, your idol, while those around you, ay, even your own kith and kin, your own flesh and blood—were left to starve. You will rue this night's work. The death of many innocent people lies at your door, among them your own son's an' that of this innocent girl, his wife, whose blood will cry aloud to heaven for vengeance on their murderer. Henceforth the brand of Cain will be on your brow, an' no luck attend you or yours; your ill-gotten wealth will wither away, the grass grow green upon your doorstep; your hand will be raised against your fellow-creatures, an' every man's hand turned against you; you will be a pariah on the face of the earth, direct offspring be denied you; your race,

even to the third an' fourth generation, shall suffer for your sin.'

"The pastor turned his back upon the old man, an', with burning eloquence, implored his flock to touch nothing belonging to the miser, as neither grace nor luck would attend them that did so. Then the priest shook the dust of the place off his feet, and followed by his parishioners left the ill-omened spot.

"Reverently bearing the body of the young wife, they reached the village, only to find that Masther Desmond, the squire's son, had been dead some hours. It was his death, an' then that of their child, that had filled Kathleen's cup of bitterness to overflowing and turned her brain, causing her to end her misery by that fatal leap into the water with the disappearing corn.

"Still with that set, wild look upon his face, the squire remained at the window, watching the mournful procession until his straining eyes could see it no longer. A bitter laugh then broke from his lips, as he told himself that he was lucky after all in saving some of his corn; his invention of the false bottom to the storehouse, which led the people to imagine the disappearing grain bewitched, had at least secured for him the safety of the remainder; that it had proved a death-trap for his own kindred troubled him but little.

"Begorra, what mattered to him the croakings of a mad old priest? What harm could that curse bring him? Henceforth his property was safe and secure from the clutches of those superstitious fools; even the most daring among them would not touch his goods now the priest had banned them."

"Well, and how did it all end; when did his prosperity begin to fade?" I asked, as our guide paused for breath and sadly wiped his forehead.

"Shure the end was ruin an' destruction, as you can see for yerself. Scarcely a month elapsed ere the first trouble overtook him, sor. He engaged a ship to remove his ill-starred corn, when what should happen but the vessel founder when hardly out of the bay; and that same night, whether by accident or design, none can tell, the remaining stores took fire, an' not a hand offered to help

put it out; although the miser frantically implored assistance from the villagers, standing at the self-same window where he had refused them food.

"This was the beginning of the troubles of the O'Donovan; what followed would take too long to tell. But destruction succeeded destruction as surely as his riverence had foretold; things went from bad to worse, until one day the miser was found dead himself from starvation. He had died alone and friendless, without the aid of priest or parson, an' with only his ill-omened gold for company; that wealth in the acquiring of which he had even grudged himself the bare necessaries of life.

"Thus it is, sor, that the curse has followed the race of O'Donovan, and that even to this day the place is banned; for the blood of that murdered girl, an' her husband an' child still cry out for vengeance, an' the grass grows green upon the doorstep ever since, just as the Soggarth Aroon predicted it would on that terrible night of suffering an' death."

JOHN LESPERANCE, MASTER.

BY ANNA T. SADLIER.

It was a delightful old brick house, with galleries upper and lower, which stood in the center of a plot of ground on Second Avenue, New York, when the present century was young. It was a palatial residence for those days, and at the back of it was a garden, which gave forth upon an evening of June the perfume of innumerable roses. These queens of the floral world were not alone, to be sure, in possession of the flower-beds, but they completely outshone the bachelors' buttons and the gilly-flowers and the phlox and the cinnamon pinks, which lent a fragrance of their own to the air.

Within the house, the porcelain-like figure of Anne Delamere overshadowed all other figures, much as the roses did the humbler flora of the garden. Neither her aunt, who was small and thin and faded, though still delicate and aristocratic, nor the housekeeper, Mrs. Ruxton, nor Miriam, the nurse, who had first held the young beauty in her arms, nor the solemn butler, as he came and went, nor the other servants, were anything more than foils to her wonderful grace and elegance, and her fine coloring, by which she resembled some rare bit of china.

She had but lately come home from France, where, after a convent education, she had spent a year. It was her pleasure to dress in the extreme fashion of the moment, the flowing drapery of the first Empire, which Josephine had made popular. And so was Anne Delamere attired when summoned to the drawing-room that June evening by some one who wanted her upon urgent business. Her gay and careless companions, who had but

just arisen from dinner, and were gathered upon the gallery, laughed at the phrase. Business seemed as remote from Anne as the dust of the earth from that tranquil moon above.

The visitor stood dumb at first in an astonishment which presently changed to something like dismay. It was as if the glowing beauty before her had dazzled her sight. Anne fixed her questioning, and, it must be owned, somewhat haughty gaze upon the woman, who, well and even handsomely dressed according to simple provincial modes, was truly a gilly-flower in presence of the rose. As the two confronted each other, the visitor's eyes sought the floor, while she spoke, hesitatingly.

"I must crave your forgiveness, Mistress Delamere, for this intrusion, but a weighty matter has brought me."

Still Anne Delamere silently regarded her. The young girl was annoyed that she should have been summoned from her gay companions by such a visitor as this.

"I arrived by the Eastern Post this evening, hence the lateness of my visit," apologized the woman.

"I feel assured that you are mistaken. Your business can scarce be with me," Anne Delamere said coldly and her very haughtiness seemed to have an interest for the woman regarding her, who shook her head as if at some thoughts of her own.

"Nay," she said, "there is no mistake; with your permission, I will briefly unfold my errand."

Anne still waited, and the woman began: "While in France you had some acquaintance with one John Lesperance."

A warm flush of color flamed into Anne's cheeks as, stepping farther into the room, she shut the door by a half involuntary movement.

"What know *you* of John Lesperance?" she demanded, but there was a veiled uneasiness in the haughty tone.

"What I know I have come hither to tell," said the woman, raising her head, so that the features, delicate and not without a certain beauty, could be seen beneath the poke of the bonnet.

"I pray you to be seated," said Anne Delamere, pointing to the sofa, with its curious carving of a dragon. The room was

sumptuously furnished, and probably had some effect upon the timid provincialism of the unbidden guest. Anne Delamere seated herself in a backed chair, agitated by a curious tumult of feeling. The name just heard had brought to her the solitary chapter in a never-to-be-forgotten romance.

"A week since there arrived in the port of Boston," began the visitor, "bound from Curaçoa, the English brigantine *Laurel,* Captain Bassett. He was in company with the homeward-bound Dutch fleet, under convoy of two men-of-war, for the high seas these times are troubled. In the stress of weather which prevailed a fortnight since, he was separated from his escort and chased by a French privateer."

A startled light came into Anne's eyes, but she asked no question.

"That privateer," said the woman slowly, "was *La Belle Normandie,* John Lesperance, master."

Anne shrank back in her chair, her eyes fixed with eager intensity upon the face before her, while the monotonous voice went on:

"The Frenchman fired a broadside, shattering the spars and riggings of the *Laurel.*"

Was it triumph which lighted Anne's exquisite features, as in her musical tones, sounding clearly through the great room like the chime of a clock, she said:

"And what did Bassett, then?"

"His vessel was all but a wreck," said the woman gravely, "but the elements came to his aid. As the young French captain was preparing to lead a boarding party, a sudden squall, with fierceness of wind, overset the privateer."

The narrator stopped as if through emotion, and Anne, leaning forward and catching the woman's gown as though she were making an appeal to her, cried:

"But he, they, I mean, the people of the privateer were saved? The captain of the *Laurel* was humane?"

Her words ended in a strange cry.

"The privateer sank with all sails set and with every soul on board."

Anne was ghastly white and rigid now, and she covered her face with a despairing impulse, as she prayed:

"My God! My God! is this the punishment for my fault?"

"So!" cried the older woman, suddenly standing erect, as though she were about to pronounce judgment. "There is some feeling left under those silks and laces, and that rose-leaf cheek can lose its color for another's woes? You are wondrously fair, Mistress Delamere, and you have been monstrously cruel."

Anne put up her arm as though to ward off a blow, while the other went on:

"You have been dowered with that perilous beauty which drives men to ruin and leaves other women desolate. And now that I look upon you and your surroundings, I can, in truth, perceive that John Lesperance was but your plaything. His honest manhood, his handsome face, his courage, his high ideals, were as naught to you. You won his love! Small wonder—for no man might resist your charm. But it was ill done to laugh at him, to scorn him as a nameless adventurer!"

The stern voice broke, and the words seemed to echo in Anne's heart:

"It was ill done! It was ill done!"

For conscience told her that in her dismissal of John Lesperance she had been unnecessarily hard, and cruel, and wicked. And this because she had been afraid of her own weakness. Afraid of the tenderness which his manly words of love had awakened in her heart, the admiration which his nobility of character had aroused in her. She had feared to sacrifice for him her world with all its idols. . . .

"Now," went on that accusing voice, "had you loved John Lesperance, as I, all my life have done——"

Anne sprang to her feet with all her old haughtiness, for indeed, this new idea was singularly distasteful to her.

"You loved John Lesperance?" she cried, and again the two women stood confronting each other, and again the head in the

poke bonnet was bent with that strange humility in which there was nothing servile.

"But he never loved me," she said speaking without any sign of the effort these words cost her, "he never even knew."

The look which came into the delicate patrician face was distinctly one of relief. Anne could not have endured to be placed upon a similar footing with this dowdy, and, to her intolerant youth, middle-aged provincial.

"John Lesperance," continued the despised one, "was the son of a French sea-captain, who, retiring because of ill-health, settled in the Maine coasting village, wherein is my dwelling. His mother was an American, but she died young, and the influence of his father was predominant. I knew John since his baby feet first pressed the pebbled beach; sturdy feet they were, and the child had the man's heart which you and I know."

There was an infinite pathos and tenderness in her tone, and her eyes were looking past the delicate beauty before her as though they conjured up the picture of that far-off childhood. Tone and words touched a responsive chord in Anne's heart, despite the barrier which her traditions and her surroundings had placed between her and those outside her sphere. There was a wonderfully softened look upon her face as she asked:

"Tell me how are you called?"

"Eunice Bradshaw," answered the other, and Anne said gently:

"And you knew him all that time?"

"And loved him from the first," added Eunice Bradshaw. "Ten years older than John, I was his playmate, his nursery maid, aye, the slave of his lightest word. But as he grew to manhood that was changed. His very thoughtfulness, and the deference he showed me, proved most evidently that I was in truth but an old friend, impossible in another light. He was ardent, dreamy, full of aspirations—"

Anne nodded assent, as though coroborating the justice of this description.

"Alas! his dearest wish was to go away," cried Eunice, with

a wail almost in her voice, "to fight for the French nation, his father's land, against the people of England."

Her voice died to a whisper, as she ended: "He went, and with him went most truly the light of that somber village, which had ne'er before seemed to me so cheerless."

Anne, though somewhat awe-stricken, had no experience by which to gauge the feelings of this other woman. She had felt the parting with John Lesperance acutely. But youth and life at its full tide have so many hopes and interests! It had been far otherwise when the solitary gleam of brightness had gone out of that other existence. Curiously enough, too, she began to feel a dull resentment against this Eunice Bradshaw, who could come, an accusing spirit, to hold up in contrast to her own conduct whole years of fidelity and lowly service. The shock of her fearful announcement concerning the privateer had disclosed to the girl as in a flash the real nature of her feelings toward that man, the bravest and the noblest, the most chivalrous and romantic, with whom she had ever come in contact.

"Listen, you strange woman," she said, suddenly. "I, too, have loved John Lesperance and all the world may know it now."

There was something of astonishment in the look which Eunice Bradshaw cast upon her, as the girl made this declaration with a half-defiant tenderness and a throwing back of her shapely head.

"And," she continued, with a light of triumph in her eyes, "John Lesperance loved me!"

She was only aware of the cruelty of these last words when the poor face before her quivered as under a blow, and the head in the poke bonnet was bent still lower. With a swift movement Anne stretched out her hand.

"Forgive me!" she cried. She was struck by the sudden dignity with which Eunice Bradshaw looked up at her:

"And John Lesperance loves you yet."

Anne understood these words as referring to the world be-

yond the grave, and she said slowly, with a strange desolation in her tone:

"Yes, I know. You mean that he will remember, and that God will, perhaps, let me see him some day, when I shall have expiated my sin. Or, mayhap, Eunice Bradshaw, he will turn to you in that other life. For God is just!"

She seemed to find an exquisite pain in the words, but Eunice Bradshaw shook her head.

"Nay, that could never be," she said, bravely, "nor do I speak of the other life and its happenings. They, fair child, are the secret of God."

"I know not what you mean," Anne cried, half-petulantly. "You have, in truth, an intimate knowledge of my story, and of the wrong my foolish pride has done this—gentleman. You seem to have been in his confidence."

Eunice Bradshaw smiled at this touch of jealousy. Her sternness had vanished. She felt as though she were dealing with a wilful child.

"I am wondering," she said, quietly, "if the heart of a woman can really abide in a gilded atmosphere, or if it may ever break bonds that are forged of silk."

"Why do you speak to me thus, Eunice Bradshaw?" Anne asked, with a sudden outburst of anger. "Think you that I do not love John Lesperance better than all the world, and that I would not take pride in his devotion and publish it, could he but speak to me now?"

She caught a strange look on Eunice's face and raised her hand.

"As God sees," she began, but Eunice Bradshaw stopped her almost sternly:

"Take not God to witness—at least, until you know."

"Know what?" cried Anne, "know what?"

"John Lesperance lives!" said Eunice Bradshaw.

"But you said," faltered Anne, shuddering at the recollection, "that the vessel went down with every soul on board."

"Sometimes the sea gives up its dead," Eunice said, grimly.

"John Lesperance is a forceful swimmer. He came within comparatively short distance of our coast and gained a perilous footing upon a rock. He was seen, he was recognized. A lifeboat snatched him from the jaws of death."

She did not mention that she, Eunice Bradshaw, had all but compelled the men take out the lifeboat and that her own strong arm had manned an oar with the force and skill that only long practice gives.

"For days and nights he lay unconscious," she went on, "in the cottage of Widow Haskins, whither he was carried. There with her I watched over him, and learned from the ravings of his delirium all of his story that concerns you. Often, in the stillness of the midnight, has he sat erect, calling loud and clear upon your name: 'Anne Delamere! Anne Delamere!' In this wise I became aware of his love and your scorn. You know him but little if you could believe he ever blamed you. Even in the disorder of his mind, he had naught but tender words for you."

Anne listened, an ever growing intensity in her eyes, a greater and greater softening in her face, while a faint, happy smile played about her lips.

"As he grew better I stole away to seek you, to beg for some word of hope or comfort, that I might bear hence to him."

Anne falling upon her knees, gave audible thanks.

"Sweet Mother of God, help me to give thanks. I am not worthy of this joy."

As she arose, she said quietly:

"You have a noble heart, which shames me, Eunice Bradshaw. And now where is he?"

"Still in the cottage of the Widow Haskins, in his native village," Eunice answered, "but in grievous peril of his life, as long as he there remains."

"In peril?" Anne asked.

"A privateer attacking upon the high seas may be sentenced to death. Should England know of his escape and demand him, this government may be forced to give him up. Therefore, I crave your message."

"Message?" cried Anne, "Why can you believe that I would now remain away from him?"

"Nay, but it is impossible you should go," Eunice said, her eyes involuntarily wandering about the room.

"I will go," cried Anne Delamere, "as soon as may be."

"You will have leisure for sober reflection ere Monday at sundown," said Eunice Bradshaw, slowly, "and, hearken—the waves beat drearily on the rock-bound shore of a rude fishing village."

"I will go," interrupted Anne, but Eunice went on unheeding, her mental vision busy with the picture she conjured up.

"In a low-roofed, ill-lighted cottage, upon a wretched pallet, lies John Lesperance."

"It matters nothing, I will go," cried Anne, and a stubborn expression compressed her dainty lips and lent a firmness to her rounded chin.

"Even the wind of June," pursued Eunice, "blows cold and chill through the ill-hung casements. Carpets there are none, chairs and settles are of wood, and in the larder scant store of food."

"The more reason I must go," said Anne.

"But what if your presence there disclose his secret?"

"Still must I go. But fear not, I will be prudent as though my own life and far more were at stake."

She began to feel a growing irritation at Eunice for seeking to keep her away, whereas the latter, arguing from a sense of duty was rejoiced at the girl's firmness, and already pictured to herself the glow of joy on the sailor's bronzed face, and the vibrating thrill in his voice which she had heard only in the somber night hours of his delirium. She was wondering how this might be brought about, how a girl—and such a girl!—could take this vital step. As if in answer to her thoughts, Anne said: "My old nurse will go with me. Save my aunt none shall know whither I have gone."

"But after?" the older woman queried.

"After—" and Anne proudly threw back her head with a deli-

cate color in her cheeks and a happy light in her eyes, "it shall be as John Lesperance, master, may decree."

"Were John Lesperance here present he would never countenance a like folly," said Eunice Bradshaw, her conscience awaking suddenly, "he would perceive as I do now that a nameless privateer is no match for such as you. Not," she added, hastily, "but that the man himself is worthy the highest lady in the land."

"He is too good for any among us," cried Anne, "and almost worthy of you, Eunice Bradshaw. Yet——"

Anne made a quaint and dainty curtsy to her visitor, as she paraphrased the old time verse:

> "Shall he, wasting in despair
> Die because a woman's fair—
> 'Cause her fortune seemeth high
> Shall he play the fool and die?
> Great or good or kind or fair
> He must never more despair!"

The musical voice rang through the darkening room, into which quivers of moonlight were penetrating and clothing the figure of the young girl with a still more unearthly beauty. Eunice Bradshaw gazed helplessly. She could in no wise understand this creature of another world, especially in her present mood of gayety—the reaction from the horror and remorseful grief which a moment since had bowed her down.

"So I tell you, Eunice Bradshaw, if John Lesperance will have me, I will marry him, and go back to France, which I love so well, and where he shall be safe from cruel laws and I will never, never let him be a privateer more."

Eunice, acquiescing in what she felt she was powerless to prevent, further agreed that she should meet Anne Delamere and her attendant and together they might go by the Eastern Post coach on Monday night. Anne walked with her visitor to the garden gate, her silken robe shimmering so in the moonlight that she seemed like a spirit as it lightly swept the old-

fashioned blooms in the flower-beds and caused the rose leaves to fall in her path. At the gate, Anne said impulsively, laying her hand upon that of the other woman:

"For all your love, your loyalty, your care of him, I thank you!"

The sallow face of Eunice Bradshaw flamed suddenly into wrath.

"*You* need not thank me. 'Twas for his sake, for my own!" And she went hastily forth, so that the garden gate swung jarringly on its hinges. She turned back, again, however, before she had gone a dozen paces down the sweep of moonlit road.

"But I will ever pray," she said, "that God may keep you both!"

Anne stood looking after her, strangely oblivious of those merry guests within the house, who wondered at her absence. While thus she stood, she seemed to hear the voice of one whom that other woman loved as she did, crying out in his delirium, not to his patient nurse, but to her, the trifler:

"Anne Delamere! Anne Delamere!"

And so it came about that there was a nine days' wonder in a very exclusive circle and that the Delamere homestead was presently shut up. For the aunt followed the niece, and Miriam had gone with her nursling. Only the housekeeper and the butler, an aged pair, remained in the mansion from which the porcelain-tinted figure had forever departed. The flowers in the garden, losing their primness, began in course of time to crowd upon each other in unmannerly fashion, the roses still claiming precedence however. Anne's story leaked out in a fragmentary way, but few ever knew that the romantic Frenchman whom she had met in her Parisian days was the privateer captain supposed to have gone to the bottom of the sea.

The wedding in the cottage of the Widow Haskins was very solemn, with the sound of surf on the rocks and the wail of the wind in the casements. Miriam the nurse was there, supporting on her sturdy arm the aunt, rather helpless and bewildered. And Eunice Bradshaw was there, standing aloof, framed by the recess

of a window. And a white-haired priest from Boston, before whom stood Anne Delamere, fair and lovely as a gem in earthy setting beside John Lesperance himself. Surely there never was a handsomer couple! The sailor, barely arisen from a sick bed and dressed in uniform for the occasion was "a prodigious fine fellow," and to the full as "personable" as the dainty, rose-leaf lady, whom he solemnly took to wife.

After the register had been signed and the young couple stood apart, Eunice Bradshaw stole out into the night, though this happiness had been the work of her hands. The young husband looking down upon the radiant beauty of his wife, said softly, as though he were still dreaming:

"Anne Delamere! Anne Delamere!"

And Anne looking up at him, half admiring, half amused, repeated in musical tones:

"John Lesperance! John Lesperance, master!"

FROM OVER THE SEA.

BY TERESA STANTON.

It was the day before Lady Day. The morning had been dark and gloomy. Gray, heavy mists lay upon the mountain tops, but, as the light of the rising sun fell upon them, they retreated in broken masses to the valleys and lower grounds beneath. There was a sharp east wind blowing, that caused the inhabitants of Lismona to keep within doors as much as possible, while many looked ruefully at their stacks of turf growing so very small, and wondered what would become of the crops if the weather continued cold.

"'Tis quare weather for this time o' year," muttered Dan O'Byrne to himself as he hurried down the boreen to his little cabin on the hillside. "I'm very glad Nellie didn't come to the fair wid me to-day, or she'd have the rheumatism fit t'kill her afore the week is out."

He soon reached the little cabin and pushed open the door. His wife was sitting on a low stool, gazing abstractedly into the fire, while her knitting lay unheeded in her lap. She looked up as he entered.

"Dan, avic, an' did you get back?"

"I did, Nellie, an' I made a fine bargain, too. You'd never guess how much I got for the white heifer."

"Well, no, I wouldn't," she replied.

"I got thirty-five shillin's."

"Now, I didn't think you could make such a good bargain when I wasn't wid you."

"Sure, Nellie, you ought to be glad you stayed at home. The wind is that sharp it cuts like a razor; the whin bushes is as flat as if they were mowed, an' I was nearly blew to tatthers meself comin' down the hill."

"'Tis the quarest weather I ever saw for this time o' year," said Nellie. "I remember this time a year ago we went to the fair an' sorra a finer day I ever saw, thanks be to God. But this won't lasht long. To-morrow is Lady Day, and you know, as a gineral rule, we always have fine weather for that day."

"Yes, indeed," said Dan, with a deep sigh, as he took his pipe from the hob, slowly filled it and lighted it. "I met Mrs. Brady to-day, an' she axed kindly for you. Her ould man is poorly, she tells me, an' the cowld these lasht few days has him kilt entirely."

"I was thinkin'," said he, after a long pull at his pipe, which made the smoke curl up in dim wreaths, "of the many fine fairs we were at in our time; though our day ain't over yet, by any means," he added, in a deprecatory tone. He seemed to be in a reminiscent mood. "D'ye remember, Nellie, me girl, the first time I saw you? 'Twas a fair day, an' I made up me mind that, whether there was a match made for you or not, I'd have you anyhow. Many a time I thought I was too presumin', whin you had such a fine holdin' o' land; an' thin, your mother was never in me favor, but I got you afther all, an' I'm as proud o' you this minute as I was the day we were married," he said, and his face beamed with happiness.

A faint tinge came into Nellie's cheeks as she looked fondly at her husband.

"We have a great dale to be thankful for," she said, softly. "We have nothin' to regret."

After a few moments more of desultory conversation, the old couple lapsed into silence.

A loneliness seemed to settle upon them that could not be dispelled. Though neither one would admit it to the other, the mere mention of Lady Day brought back precious memories to both of them—memories of their daughter. She was their only

child, and she had left home some years ago and had gone far over the sea to win fame with her wonderful voice.

To-morrow would be her birthday, and, though they were always lonesome for her, yet they missed her more at this time than at any other. Almost unconsciously, their thoughts reverted to her first birthday when, as a wee mite of humanity, she had taken hold of their hearts.

Other birthdays came and went, and all too soon she left the happy years of childhood behind and grew into womanhood.

And now, another birthday was at hand, and they shrank from the thought of how many more would elapse ere she would return to them. She had never been home since that day long ago when she said good-by to them, for she found that time was precious, and that she must work hard if she would succeed. The letters she sent them from time to time served, in a measure, to allay their loneliness; but, to-night, a gloom seemed to settle upon them that could not be dispelled.

Presently, Dan was roused from his reverie by hearing his wife say:

"Here we're sittin', Dan, watchin' the fire, an' it's gone out before our very eyes."

Dan recovered himself quickly.

"An' me pipe's gone out, too, an' sure I thought I was smokin' it all the time," he said, with a sharp little laugh, as he rose and stretched his arms to their full length.

"'Tis time you were hungry, Dan, for you didn't have a bite since mornin'," said Nellie, as she rose and laid her knitting on the hob; "so hurry up now, an' feed the horse and the cows; I fed the pigs meself a while ago, so you needn't mind them. But be careful, Dan," she added, with solicitude, as he was going out, "whin you're feedin' that horse. The longer I look at him the more I think he's a fairy horse, for he's as black as the night, an' the ways he rolls his eyes an' cocks up his ears whin there's nothin' around to scare him makes me think the fairies must be whisperin' to him."

Dan broke into a hearty laugh.

"Nellie, me girl, I never thought you'd get childish this soon," he said, as he took his coat from the peg and went out.

Nellie began immediately to prepare the evening meal. "Dan'll like a bit o' bacon, I know," she said to herself, as she took a flitch of bacon from the beam overhead. "'Tis a good while since we had any."

Soon the supper was steaming away over the blazing turf fire. Suddenly she stopped in the midst of her preparations.

"I declare, Dan never brought home a bit o' tay wid him," she said, with evident disappointment, "an' it was the last thing I tould him when he left home this mornin'. Well, now, isn't that too bad, an' us not havin' a bit for the lasht two days. Dan is gettin' so forgetful, I don't know what I'll do wid him at all, at all," she said, with evident apprehension; "but, faix, if he saw me talkin' to meself this way, he'd think I was gettin' childish, sure enough," and she smiled at the thought of it.

She sat down before the fire with her face resting on her hands.

"I wonder if he wint to the post-office to-day. If he did, an' got nothin', he'll never say a word about it to me. Well, to make sure, I'll just ask him whin he comes in. 'Tis too bad intirely if we don't get some word from our little girl."

She buried her face in her hands, and now and then a tear would silently steal through the wrinkled old fingers.

After a few moments she arose and placed the dishes on the table.

"The supper is ready now, if he was only ready," she said again to herself. "'Tis quare what's keepin' him so long." She took up her knitting again with renewed vigor. Row after row was added to the stocking in her hand, and still Dan had not come in. She began to grow worried.

"What in the world can be kapin' him?" she said, as she opened the door and peered out into the gathering darkness; but a heavy fog had settled all about the foot of the hill, and she could see nothing.

She resumed her work again with a deep sigh.

She had scarcely started when the door was quickly opened,

and Dan came in, his eyes gleaming with suppressed excitement, while he held an odd-looking bundle in his hand.

"Did I keep you waitin' long, Nellie?"

"You did, indeed; I never knew you to be so long before; I thought sure the fairy horse had you kilt; but what have you in the bundle, an' what's wrong wid you? Your two eyes is dancin' out o' your head."

"One question at a time, Nellie, me girl," he said, playfully. "Just wait a minute an I'll tell you all about it. Afther I was done wid the feedin', I thought all of a suddint that I didn't go to the post-office to-day; so I just said to meself 'I'll run up there now; 'twon't take me long.' I didn't expect nothin', but just to make me mind aisy, I thought I'd go."

"Yes, Dan; an' did you get a letther?" she said then, breathlessly.

"No; but I got this bundle, an' it has the mark o' London on it; so I know it's from our little girl," he said, softly, as he began to untie the bundle.

"But let the rest o' the story t'you. When I got to the post-office an' the misthress tould me there was no letther for me, I was disapp'inted an' no mistake. So I walked away, dissatisfied-like, an' I was at the dure whin she called me back an' said, 'I have a package o' some sort here for you, Misther O'Byrne.'

"'A package for me,' says I, for I was kind o' surprised that I'd get a package from any one. 'Yes; here it is,' she said, handin' me this," as he indicated the awkward-looking bundle. "An' now we must find out what's in it. It's mighty heavy for the size o' it."

By this time he had untied the bundle. They were greatly surprised to find that it contained a rather small oaken box, with a sort of iron frame on the top of it.

Just inside the frame was a cylinder that seemed to Dan to be made of wax. It had been carefully wrapped in soft cotton. Lying beside the box was a large horn.

"I'm sure I don't know what this is, at all, at all," said Dan, in evident perplexity. "Ah, maybe this'll tell us somethin' about

it," as he picked up a small piece of paper that lay beside the horn.

"'Tis our little girl's writin'," he said, joyfully, as his wife leaned over to look at the paper, "an' now let us see what it says." He began to read very slowly.

"The— I can't make out what that word is, Nellie," he said, after a moment's study. "I never saw it in print before; p-h-o-n-o-g-r-a-p-h is the way it's spelled. It must be the name o' this thing," as he pointed to the instrument. "Now, let me see. From what she says here, this horn must be fastened on that bit o' iron; I guess that must be the way," as he put the horn into place.

"Now, she says, turn th' kay until it's wound tight. That's all she says about it. She has somethin' here at th' bottom o' th' paper. Listhen, Nellie! 'To my dear parents, as a remembrance of my birthday,'" he read slowly and deliberately; but there was a suspicious moisture in his eyes.

"Well, Nellie, I'm goin' t'turn the kay an' we'll see what happens, for, to save me life, I can't make out what the thing's good for."

They were rather startled to hear a few harsh sounds issue from the instrument, and then the little room seemed to be filled with music. Nellie and Dan looked at each other in astonishment. Presently they heard singing—such sweet singing.

Nellie grasped Dan by the arm as the first notes of his favorite song fell upon their ears:

"There is not in this wide world a valley so sweet
As the vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet!
Oh, the last ray of feeling and life must depart
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart."

"'Tis our little girl singin' to us from across the sea," whispered Dan in an awestruck tone, while the tears were running down his wrinkled face.

Oh, with what pathos she sang! She was telling them, as plainly as she could, all the longing and loneliness that had been

hidden in the deep recesses of her heart during the past few years, but which seemed now to burst forth as she thought of the lonely old couple far over the sea waiting patiently for her.

The notes of the last verse floated softly through the little room:

"Sweet vale of Avoca! how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade with the friends I love best,
Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should cease,
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace."

The last notes rose, fell, and died away. The silence in the room was broken only by Nellie's sobs.

Tenderly Dan clasped her in his arms, and in a voice trembling with emotion said, "Nellie, me girl, we have a great dale to be thankful for."

"We have, indeed," she answered.

IN PASSING.

BY MARION AMES TAGGART.

EVERY morning she went past on her way to work, and the sharp click of her crutches alternated with the soft, padded sound of her one footfall, as she swung it after the reach of the crutches. She had a thin, pathetic face, which might have been pretty if it had not been prematurely worn by pain.

There was a great deal of rain that winter; it seemed to Helen, watching her daily from her window, that it was rarely that the little figure was not buffeted by wind and wet by rain, for the crutches made an umbrella impossible.

"Poor creature!" Helen thought. "Poor, brave little creature! It is hard enough to earn one's daily bread, I fancy, but to do it when one is crippled! And to be crippled at that age! Why, she can't be older than I."

Then Helen would turn away with a sigh of pity, and then a second pitying sigh for herself. After all, was it worse to be forced to labor, even under such disadvantages, than to have every want supplied and to be consumed with emptiness and discontent? Helen had no obligations, no duties, no interests ready made for her; no family to whom she owed, or from whom she might hope for anything in the way of love or sympathy. Her large income was regularly paid to her by her guardian—too large for her needs, for Helen was not fond of gaiety, nor extravagant—and she suffered from boredom and loneliness, lacking the energy to assume duties not already at her doors, to make for herself ties not already binding her.

"I suppose it would surprise Pippa if I went out some stormy morning and offered her a share of my fortune, in exchange for

value received in interest in somebody, assuming that she would let me be interested in her," Helen said aloud to the great Milo Venus in the corner of her library. "I am sure I don't know why I call her Pippa; she is little enough like Browning's happy, singing little creature, except that she passes."

"Pippa"—Esther she was in truth—went on her painful way, not dreaming of the futile interest she awakened in the breast of the other more fortunate girl. She swung along over the gray sidewalks, racked at each step by the pressure of the crutches and the strain on her frail body. She had not yet lost the fear of slipping when it was wet; sometimes the rubber tips of her crutches did fail in their duty, and she had a sharp twinge of terror lest she should go down. At the end of her daily pilgrimage, a dusky room, up two narrow flights of stairs, awaited her, where all day she must work in feathers, fashioning breasts and wings of the plumage of other little creatures, stricken down in their flight as she had been. She could not rid herself of the feeling that there was more kinship between her and these little victims to fashion than the universal kinship between man and his "little brothers." She had been so strong and blithe and active before that awful day when the great wheels of the automobile truck had maimed her! She had run, and danced, and sung as carelessly as these birds had flown, and now—

Her way led her through the intricacies of Greenwich village, across Washington Square, and still farther down through West Broadway. Every morning she met, and almost at the same corner, a young man who looked at her keenly, and at whom she looked back wistfully with her big eyes, out of her thin little face. They had come to recognize each other, and in this case Esther divined the pity and interest that she awakened in his mind.

Once, when the asphalt pavement was slippery from rain, that which Esther dreaded happened. Her crutch slipped, she lost her hold upon it, and would have fallen but that the young man with the good face and kindly eyes happily was near her, sprang to her rescue and saved her the jarring fall, at the mere

prospect of which every quivering nerve in her slender body shrank painfully.

Her face lightened beautifully with the gratitude and delight of her reprieve, and her voice thrilled musically as she thanked her deliverer. She even allowed him to help adjust the crutch to her arm again, noting with what womanly gentleness and delicacy he accomplished the task. Then she went on her weary way, and the young man went gaily on his, lifting his cap in farewell with a smile that cheered the suffering girl all the rest of the stormy day.

Esther debated what was the proper course for her to pursue when they met again after this kindness received and given. It was a pleasant and exciting thing to have such an interesting problem to solve, and the girl lay awake fully an hour beyond her usual sleeping time, wondering if it would be bold and unmaidenly to recognize her friend in need by a little, little bow and smile, when she saw him in the morning hastening across the dear old square; whether it would not be remiss and ungrateful not to do so. She resolved to consult Sister Aloysia after the next Sodality meeting on something too difficult for her own solving. She really felt less alone in the world as she debated the question, and fell asleep smiling, with a faint flavor of other young girls' happiness lurking in the smile.

She had left the great matter undecided, but when she met John Price in the morning it decided itself. The sun was shining blithely after the rain, and the broad houses on the north side of the square smiled at the two young people, their red brick walls and clinging vines washed bright by the storm.

Esther swung along almost gaily on her crutches, and when John came into sight he doffed his hat so quickly, with such a merry smile, that Esther smiled and nodded back, with no longer a doubt that it was the right, as it was the pleasant thing to do. After that, each morning the vigorous young fellow smiled and bowed to the crippled girl, but the acquaintance developed no further, for John had a small opinion of himself and did not wish to thrust himself upon a girl less fortunate than others, to

whom he had been able to render a service, and in whom he discerned a certain reserve, in spite of the pleasant smile, which he thought prohibitory.

Yet every day he found himself looking forward to that brief salutation, and to meeting the lovely eyes shadowed by pain.

"Cripple or not, she is sound in heart and soul," he thought. "I wish there were some way to know her better without being presumptuous. She's the only girl I ever saw that I would care to marry. I wouldn't mind her being lame—not a bit! I can earn enough for both of us; I believe I could almost be glad she was lame, and to know that I could make life more easy for her. Such beautiful, sad eyes, poor child! And how brave and steady she is, going every day on those awful crutches to earn her little living! And here am I, the loneliest fellow in New York, with my strong hands and broad shoulders! I can't go to her and say: Come, little dove-eyes, marry me, and come to me and make a home for me, and let me love you and take care of you forever. Some day, perhaps, I may find the way; I should hate to think we were to be friends only in passing."

In the mean time weeks slipped by, and Helen from her window, and John in his daily meeting with her, saw that Esther was growing painfully thinner, the black shadows under her beautiful eyes heavier, her lips more wan. The girl's strength was failing, and with it her ability to turn out as much work each day as had been her custom, or as was demanded of her. Something humane there was in her employer; he did not discharge the girl; but with his humanity was a keen business sense, and he did not feel himself justified in paying Esther as much as she had received when she was able to earn more. Reduced wages meant reduction in food, and this again reduction of the waning strength. It was not strange that Esther grew emaciated, and her smile in return for John's but the pale shadow of a smile.

Helen, bored, discontented, laden with wealth she did not know how to dispose of, watched the girl with futile pity.

"If I only dared," she thought; "if I only did dare to rush out and bid Pippa come in and stay with me here, and be taken

care of till she was a little able to take care of herself! And she could surely do as much for me, poor, lonely, discontented me, as I could do for her! Some day I think I'll make it my business to meet her on her way, and speak to her. I wonder if she would resent it?"

And John, his kind heart full of a pity nearer than most pity to love, saw Esther's increasing weakness, longing to take her to his heart, and to a home which he lacked and for which he hungered, but passing helplessly by, a stranger still.

At last there came a day, when Helen, from the window, and John lingering at the corner of the square, missed Esther's little form. Six, seven, eight days passed and still she did not come. Helen was uneasy; the girl had looked so ill! But she comforted herself with the reflection that she might have gone into the country, which would do her so much good, and reminding herself that, whatever had happened to the little lame girl, she had no clew to her identity, so could not help her, dismissed her from her mind.

But on the tenth day, when Esther came no more, John could bear it no longer. Once he had permitted himself to follow the crippled girl, and he knew where she was employed. Thither he now turned his steps. He climbed the narrow, dilapidated stairs that led to the feather manufactory. A pale girl came forward to meet him as he entered.

"A lame girl?" she repeated after him. "Worked here? Yes; Esther Lane." Her eyes filled with tears. "You want to know what has become of her? If you're any friend of hers you ought to have come sooner. Esther is dead; we buried her yesterday. We girls done it."

John groaned. The bare fact was so dreadful, and he felt sure sweet Esther would not have spoken incorrectly.

"She just failed away after she was hurt," the girl went on. "She couldn't earn much, so she didn't really have enough to eat, and she died. We sent her to the hospital; too late it was. We buried her; she didn't have a relation nor friend, except us girls, in the world. She'd been born a lady, we thought. We feel awful

bad. We're going to have Masses said for her—that's all we can do."

And the good young creature choked and wiped her eyes with her stained fingers. John turned away silently, grief and regret consuming him. He could have given her so much! But he had only known her in passing, and now it was too late: Esther had passed.

AN IDLE GIRL.

BY KATHARINE TYNAN.

Every one said that Frances was idle, too fond of reading, and dreaming, and mooning about the fields and hedgerows—every one except her father, and he only said, "Let her be!"

But, then, the father had a fond partiality for his idle daughter, and would take her away from the tasks the housewifely elder sister had set her, to drive with him over his fields, or to the town when he went there on business. She was always ready to read for him, or write for him, or talk to him. But that, in the elder sister's opinion, was another sort of idleness. To her, work meant sweeping and dusting, washing and ironing, baking cakes, and looking after fowl and pigs. Frances comforted her father for the son who had disgraced him and nearly broken his heart.

Frances began to write stories and poems, and one thing or another, when she was quite a child. Her father liked them, and she was never ashamed to read them to him. To be sure, he thought far better of them than they deserved, even when he didn't always understand them. More idleness, Sophie, the elder sister, called it, when she found Frances burning candles at night while she scribbled away furiously. The Emerys had always been housewives. They had never bothered about reading and writing. Sophie was for burning the stuff Frances wrote and forbidding her candles at night, but again John Emery, in his strong, gentle way interfered. "Let the child be," he said. And most unwillingly Sophie obeyed him. When John Emery spoke like that there was no question of disobedience.

When Frances was about fifteen she came in one day from the wood and Miss Arbuthnot, the Squire's sister, with her.

Frances was rather shy and Miss Arbuthnot very much excited. The village disapproved of Miss Arbuthnot as much as it was possible for it to disapprove of any one belonging to the Squire. For one thing, she wouldn't stay at home in Nuthurst. She lived in London by herself, and whenever she went down to the Manor House she took with her a train of carelessly dressed and unconventional persons—poets, artists, actors, all sorts of queer fish. Some of their names were known world-wide, but Nuthurst didn't care for that. Nuthurst was just as immovable as the hill over it, and it shook its head at an Arbuthnot who cared for such low companions and pursuits. Why didn't she stay at home and look after her brother, and be lady of the Manor and Lady Bountiful to the village, instead of gadding in London?

The village was not affected by the Squire's opinion of his sister, which was the very highest. The Squire had not married again after the death of his wife and he was childless. The heir was a distant cousin; his branch of the Arbuthnots and the elder branch had been estranged for a long time. So the village never saw the heir. It understood that he was a lawyer chap in London. But, after all, the Squire might marry yet; he was still a fine, robust man. And it was the thing for him to do, the village declared, seeing as how Miss Laura was such a gadabout.

Miss Laura had found Frances scribbling poetry in her black, shiny-covered book in the wood. She had come on Frances unawares and had insisted on reading the poetry.

"She must have learned it from the blackbirds and thrushes," she said. "O Mr. Emery, you must give the child a chance. Don't you know she's a genius? You must send her to school. Give her to me, Mr. Emery. Let me have the training of her. You'll be tremendously proud of her one day."

John was staggered at the suddenness of the proposal. He didn't want to give up Frances. She was the sweetest thing in his life. Still, if it was for her good! And no one in Nuthurst ever thought of gainsaying the will of an Arbuthnot.

They had hardly time to think about it before Frances was gone.

"You should not have let her go, father," said Sophie, and there was a flash of tears in her hard, fine gray eyes which her father had never seen there before. "Don't you know that her going means that we lose Frances altogether?"

He answered her softly, for the sake of those unexpected tears. "We couldn't have done the best for her, lass. She was different from ourselves."

"I'd have made a good housekeeping woman of her," said Sophie. "That is the happiest lot for a woman. And she could have married our neighbor, Robert Ashe, and we could have joined the farms. She was growing up very pretty. Robert couldn't have resisted her. And I'd have made her a brisk young woman in time."

"She'd never have taken Robert Ashe," said the father. "Robert Ashe is more in your way, Sophie. I often thought he fancied you."

"He can't have his fancy then," Sophie said, with a certain roughness. "I'll stay with you, father. Not that I think he ever wanted me."

After all, Miss Arbuthnot did not send Frances to school. She kept her with her, and put her education in the hands of an old Miss Douglas, who had once been her own governess, whom she had lately discovered living in poverty and had carried off to the big house in a high western square, far beyond the fashionable regions, but rejoicing in sky and air and great, stately rooms.

When Miss Arbuthnot looked round on Frances and Miss Douglas, in the pretty, bright, high rooms, commanding a view, as far as the London smoke would permit it, over London, her face was full of gratified benevolence. She felt as though those two, the old woman, who would always be young, and the child, constituted a family for her to love and care for. Miss Laura was no longer young, and she had wanted a creature or creatures to protect and love. To be sure, there was Herbert. Herbert was devoted to her. But, after all, there was nothing to be done for Herbert, since all the world smiled on him, and he must one day reign at the Manor—but reconcile him to Fairfax. Fairfax was

the Squire. He had no idea that his sister had made friends with the heir, had almost a motherly attachment for him. Miss Laura said to herself that Herbert and Fairfax had only to know each other to be reconciled. But, then, Miss Laura was always optimistic.

Frances fretted for her father and the country. When Miss Laura perceived that she was fretting overmuch she took her back to them. When it was time to carry off Frances again, she had the unfailing incentive to courage.

"You will see what you will do for him some day—how proud he will be of you."

But there came a time when Frances announced to Miss Arbuthnot that her place was with her father.

"What!" said the lady. "After all I have done for you?"

"I love you with all my heart," said Frances, "and it breaks my heart to leave you and Miss Douglas. Only, my father is not well; he is in trouble about something. He needs me."

"You will never be able to take up the life again," said Miss Laura. "And what am I to say to Herbert when he comes back?"

"I shall tell him myself that I have gone back to the Meadow Farm," said Frances, lowering the lids over her sweet brown eyes. "I ought never to have left it; I ought not indeed, Miss Laura. Only I was too young to know, and my father sacrificed himself for what he thought to be my good."

"With *your* future!" cried Miss Laura.

"I hope I *have* a future," said Frances.

She took up her place at the Meadow Farm as though she had never left it. She took back something of light and joy to the house, although plainly there was trouble there. According to Sophie she was as idle as ever, although now Sophie talked of the idleness with a smile.

She had her own old room, and now she scribbled there and burnt as many candles as she would, unrebuked. She was understood to be writing stories. She had indeed already published a book which had made a considerable stir as the work of a young writer. John Emery and Sophie understood that Frances was

paid money for her stories; and Sophie wondered how people could ever be foolish enough to pay for such nonsense.

"Let her buy ribbons with it," said Sophie.

"Aye, indeed," said John Emery; "not but what her cheeks would shame the pinkest ribbon."

There was trouble at the Meadow Farm, but neither John nor Sophie thought of troubling Frances with it. She had chosen them before her grand friends, and her grand friends had deserted her. If the time came when they had to leave the Meadow Farm it would be time enough to tell Frances how the scapegrace Willie, who had died away from them, had died head over ears in debt, and how his father had ruined himself to pay those debts.

Frances scribbled and scribbled away, and none of her fine friends came near her. The winter was a dark and cold one, and the ruin came steadily nearer the Emerys.

"'Tis time to tell her," said John Emery, on Christmas eve. "We should never have taken her from Miss Laura. Maybe she'd have her back. Let us tell her we're to leave the Meadow Farm and move to the town. You'd better by half marry Robert Ashe, my girl, and leave me. I could bear my ruin better alone."

"I will never leave you," said Sophie, with a flash of her eyes. "Frances can go back to Miss Laura. Indeed, father, Miss Laura has written to me begging to have her back, but I kept back the letter. You and I will stay together."

"If I had a few hundred pounds I could stock the land and hope for better times," said John Emery, with a groan. "But I can only pay the rent for the last time and go. Squire will easily find a new tenant."

Into the big kitchen came Frances, shy and smiling, holding her pink apron up in a bunch.

"I've a Christmas box for you, father," she said.

"I've none for you, my little girl," said John Emery, brokenly. "Nothing but trouble. And what is that you are carrying in your apron, Frances?"

She went up to him and shook her apron in his face. There was the jingle of coin.

"Money, father," she said. "The earnings of a year—and all for you. Some one had it turned into gold for me. It is quite heavy."

He looked at her apron as though it were Aladdin's cave.

"It is a joke, Frances," he said.

"There are five hundred golden sovereigns all for you, father," she said, laughing and crying, "and I have earned them all myself."

Some one pushed open the heavy kitchen door and came in, the very finest of fine young gentlemen.

"The year is over, Frances, and I have come back," he said. "You will not banish me any more. Aunt Laura is at the Manor House and the Squire has bidden me welcome. Tell your father who I am, Frances."

John Emery looked from one to another.

"This is Mr. Herbert Arbuthnot, father," Frances said shyly, "and, and—"

"Your daughter has promised to marry me," said the young gentleman; "but she banished me for a year. The year was to be all yours. Well, Frances, you have done pretty well," he went on, glancing at her apron.

"Take it, father," said Frances. "It is for you."

"So we need never leave the Meadow Farm," cried Sophie, bursting into tears.

BREAKING THE NEWS.

BY EUGÉNIE UHLRICH.

William Knepper looked out upon the swiftly-moving fields, stubble-covered now and yellow, with the dark line of water running through them here and there—the drainage ditch not quite dry, even in the seared days of early August. He chuckled with the satisfaction of the man who recognizes his own advantages.

They did not have to do that on the farms in Wisconsin where he lived. Wisconsin was a great State. Now that he had seen a good portion of the rest of the country—he had been all the way to Detroit—he liked it better than ever. It was good to get back to it, and that with feet that fitted their shoes.

William, or rather Billy Knepper, as every one called him in Willsburg, chuckled still more when he looked at his heavy shoes. When he came eastward three months before he had on carpet slippers. The fields were just showing a veil of green above the ground, velvety-brown in places, clay-yellow in others. The air was full of dashes of fragrance, and when his eyes were not closed in pain, there came to him visions of bloom, peach and pear, apple and plum, such as Wisconsin hardly knew.

For years he had dreamed of taking a trip to Chicago. He had always planned it, however, for some season of the year when he could spare the time. Billy was careful about sparing the time. He usually had just one thing more to do. Then the little spell between planting and harvesting, or just after thrashing and before husking passed, and another year was over, before he got away. He might have gone in the winter, but he always

did have a little rheumatism, and it is comfortable to keep near your own stove.

But how things do come around! He had gone, in the busiest of times, in the spring, when the planting, and the stock, and the roads, and everything needed looking after.

His weatherbeaten face, tanned by the seasons of forty years, was pale from seclusion and bleached by baths now. His hands, large-knuckled from work, were white as a gentleman's. He looked down at them smilingly. They seemed little like his hands. But the fingers were limber again and the swelling gone from them. Thank heaven! And, after all, it would be pleasant, for one year in his life, to sell crops he had not helped to raise. It would almost pay for the agonies of the racking journey going, when he was not even easy in the cushions of a parlor-car. He chuckled to himself again. He was thankful that he was not going back in that parlor-car. He felt like a king in the hard, short seat of the day coach now, when, instead of a swollen wreck, he was rather a good-looking farmer of forty-five, though his beard was a bit gray and his head bald. His sack suit even had a jaunty air which he had not known in Willsburg. He had traveled. He knew something of the world and its styles now. And Billy chuckled again, as he thought of the prestige that was to be his. And, really, he could afford it.

When the doctor had first told him that he had better go to the Springs for the sulphur baths, he had stared at him and asked him if he took him for a millionaire. And the doctor, who was prosperous and blunt, said: "Well, if you're not a millionaire, you're the richest farmer in the township. But what is it to you when you sit around here crippled and making everybody, especially your wife, miserable. Take her along, too, for a few weeks. It will do her good and keep you from getting lonesome. You'll never get better here with no one to make you do what I tell you to do."

So after some more twinges in his joints and his purse, Billy went. But he did not take his wife along. Somebody had to look after things, so she had to stay behind.

The great thing in Billy's mind now was Chicago. He watched the stations intently, leaning down to read the mile signs—so far from Detroit, so far to Chicago. He asked every one on the train something about the city. How to get to a safe, cheap hotel, how to get to the wonderful Lincoln Park, and up where the World's Fair had been.

When he got off at the immense station and stood bewildered by its seeming confusion, he suddenly thought he saw Tom Williams, his wife's brother, coming toward him. But what would bring Tom here? Yet, surely there was the soft cap that Tom always wore in hot weather, the black coat and the gray trousers, to say nothing of the side whiskers of which Billy always made so much fun. Tom was older than Billy, and a clerk in the store at Willsburg. He sometimes even came to Chicago for the "House," as he called it, and had a great deal more experience of the world than his brother-in-law. But Tom had no money, so, in spite of his experience, Billy was apt to think slightingly of Tom's judgment.

When the man finally came toward him, Billy was better pleased than he thought he could be to see him. He held out his hand and shook Tom's with rare brotherly warmth.

"Are you in the city, too? Then I'm all right. Business for the 'House'?" he asked. Vacations did not enter into his calculations.

Tom nodded. "Maybe," he added. "I know a little farmer's hotel not far away. Let's go and get breakfast. I don't suppose you've had yours?"

Billy himself settled himself, comfortable and satisfied, at the hotel table.

"No need my asking all those questions of everybody if I'd known I was going to meet you."

"The next train goes home in three hours," said Tom, absently twisting his salt box.

"Yes," said Billy. "I don't think it'll go in three days for me."

Tom did not answer. He did not seem to eat very much, and

before Billy was fairly through with his own ham and eggs, he was asking him to go upstairs into the hotel parlor.

Billy could not help saying something about not coming to Chicago to sit around hotel parlors like a lot of women. But Tom answered that it was quieter in there and they could rest a few minutes.

"We've had a good many storms up our way lately," said Tom, dropping into a chair near the window.

"Do any damage?" asked Billy, carelessly, and looking around at the stiff furniture with an air of appreciative scrutiny. He had seen better at the Springs, and developed standards since he left Willsburg.

"Better hotel than Brady's at Willsburg, isn't it?" he added then.

"There was a good deal of damage done," went on Tom, "though not much in a general way. It struck, too."

"Where?"

"Pretty near home."

"The McMillans?"

"No."

"Burnses?"

"No."

"McGoverns?"

Tom shook his head and twisted the cap in his hand.

"There isn't anybody else left around there," said Billy.

"Well," said Tom, slowly, "there's us."

"Us?" screamed Billy, jumping from his chair. "Why don't you tell a man, then? You sit there— What was struck?"

"Well, the barn—"

"It burned down?"

Tom nodded.

"But you saved the stable and the horses?" said Billy, anxiously.

"Not a horse."

"Not a horse! What were you all doin'? Let the horses burn up like that? Six good horses?"

Tom looked at the excited man as if wondering how to go on.

"The wind was toward the house."

"But that didn't burn, too?"

Tom nodded.

"Quit waggling your head at me like that!" Billy grabbed the back of his chair and thumped it on the floor. "Not half insured, and a man's crops, and stock, and buildings burned over his head." Billy shook the chair so that the hotel proprietor, passing through the hall, came in, alarmed at the noise. "What is it to you, Tom Williams, that I lose everything I worked for for more than twenty years?"

"You have your health back, and you still have your land. Try to resign yourself to the will of God."

"Resign myself? It's easy for you to talk about *resigning* on the blackest day of my life. *You* never had anything to lose, and you never will!"

Tom's face twitched. "Come to the train," he said, rising.

"Come to the train? Not for you. You couldn't even let me have a few days' fun in Chicago. Got to spoil the whole trip for me. That's just like you. But even if I've lost my buildings and my crops, *you* can't run me yet."

Tom's face hardened. He remembered how much Billy's wife, his own sister, would have liked to have gone on this trip with Billy. How she had drudged eleven hours for every one of Billy's ten! It made him bitter against the selfishness of this man, who raved over his losses and never even asked about his wife and children. He needed punishment, and Tom meant he should have it.

"If you take it that way, I don't see how I can tell you the rest—"

"What rest?" asked Billy.

"It struck at night. People are asleep at night, and you don't seem to think of what can happen at times like that."

"What could happen?" said Billy, in a hollow tone, his face, red with anger, growing blue-white even to the lips.

"You haven't asked a word about the family yet."

"But you don't mean—there couldn't any of them have been hurt? They're all big enough to get out."

"It was night," repeated Tom. "Mary tried to help little Johnny—" Tom stopped as if overcome.

"Go on," whispered Billy, "*that's* why you came on. Oh, my God!"

"Josie will get better, and Annie, too, but Johnny and his mother and Katie—"

"Poor, poor Mary! If I'd only taken her with me! She wanted to come, and she never had any real pleasure in all the twenty years of hard work."

Suddenly Billy sat down and began to sob out aloud, "Oh, Mary, Mary—"

"Let us go to the train," said Tom, gently, "home."

"Home, home? To what? I hope God will forgive me for talking about the crops and the buildings—" Billy passed his hand over his face in a dazed way. "I can't believe it, I can't understand it,—going home and no Mary and no children."

"There's Josie and Annie," said Tom.

"Oh, yes, poor things!" whispered Billy.

"That's better, man," said Tom. "I thought you'd change your tune."

"What do you mean?" asked Billy.

"The way you're taking it, and—"

"And what?"

"I really didn't say they were dead. You put that—"

Billy gripped his arm. "Tom Williams, if you're fooling me—"

"Well, you did seem to think too much of the horses and—"

"And Mary and the children are all right?"

Tom nodded.

"And you just came down on purpose to meet *me?*"

Tom nodded again. "Mary was afraid you'd hear about it from somebody else, and the doctor said you mustn't be worried. So—"

Billy did not let him finish. To the astonishment of the

hotel proprietor, who hung around in the background, he threw his arms around Tom and hugged him. "Thanks be to God," he almost sobbed. "Let's get to the train, quick. Say, it's the happiest day of my life, and when I do go to Chicago Mary'll go, too."

THE BRETHERTON BOWL.

BY MARY T. WAGGAMAN.

It was a prehistoric bowl, according to American chronology, for it had brimmed with mulled wine, negus, and various other comforting drafts, while its owners loyally toasted three Georges, and was already "old china" in the mahogany closet at Bretherton Hall when the shot that roused the world rang out at Bunker Hill.

Yet there was not a nick in its egg-shell surface, nor had the garlanding rosebuds lost a whit of their pristine bloom when the old bowl held the post of honor this June night at St. Mary's garden fête. Filled with an innocent but delicious brew of pine-apple lemonade, that was dispensed by Miss Betty Bretherton and half a dozen assistant Hebes, it drew thirsty crowds to the gay little refreshment booth, and piled high the dimes and nickels that were to help on the orphanage Father John was building on Bretherton Hill.

Conspicuous among the orphans' patrons were the glittering epaulets and buttons of half a dozen young officers from the United States warship "Columbia," anchored in the neighboring roads.

"By George!" cried one of these sturdy sons of Neptune, grasping his companion's arm. "Look there, Mervyn."

"I *am* looking," was the emphatic answer. "And she is something worth looking at. Prettiest girl I've seen since we struck this hemisphere."

"The very fac-simile!" said the other, excitedly.

"Impossible! There couldn't be a fac-simile to those eyes and dimples on the round earth."

"Oh, confound the eyes and dimples!" cried the other, impatiently. "I'm talking about the bowl, man—that Dresden punch bowl. It's the exact counterpart of the one I smashed in midocean last spring."

"Nonsense, Jack! Steady yourself, old chap. You're getting a little off on the subject of that bowl," said Mervyn.

"I tell you it's a fac-simile," replied Jack excitedly. "Mervyn, that bowl I must have. Come on, I'll treat to half a gallon of that swash if need be, while I find out if I can beg, buy, borrow, or steal it."

And thus it happened that Miss Betty and her attending nymphs were beleaguered at their post by a group of handsome young officers, who held the front of the booth for the next ten minutes, investing in sweets of all kinds with a recklessness that threatened to bull the sugar market. Cakes, cream comfits, caramels, were bought with an utter disregard of dimes and dyspepsia.

"But this won't keep your orphans in shoe leather," said Jack, as he dumped a whole pocketful of small change in Miss Betty's cash box. "Let us do some bigger business. The punch bowl, for instance. How much for that?"

"The punch bowl!" exclaimed Miss Betty, opening her brown eyes, and shutting off her dimples.

"I'll give ten dollars for it—no?—then fifteen—twenty," continued eager Jack, quite misapprehending her indignant gaze.

"You can not have it," said Miss Betty, flushing.

"Thirty, forty, fifty," continued Jack, too interested to observe the danger signal on the pretty cheek.

"Fifty-five," shouted one of his comrades in the background.

"Sixty," called another, ready to swell the fun, for all were aware of Jack's present craze. "Seventy, seventy-five, eighty, ninety!" The bidding was growing fast and spirited now.

"One hundred!" cried Jack, quite losing his head in his excitement. "Going at one hundred dollars, going, going, gone! The bowl is mine."

"Never!" cried Miss Betty, finding indignant speech at last. "The bowl is *mine*. It has been in our family for two hundred

years. And "—Jack fairly cowered before the flame of the brown eyes—"no money can buy it, sir!"

Hapless Jack fell back, mortified and abashed, unaware that he had been tramping recklessly over most delicate ground, for the Bretherton pride and the Bretherton poverty formed a combination on which even the proverbial fool dared not venture. Every one in St. Mary's knew that the wide wasted fields were open ground to wandering stock, that the stately old Hall was weighed down by a mortgage, that Miss Betty herself in the grandmother's lace tucker that etherealized her ten cent muslin gown was a very little modern Amazon, fighting for her invalid mother with pen, brush, and needle, against the gaunt wolf of poverty growling at their door. The wolf's growl was especially ominous to-night, when Betty came home from the little garden fête in which she had taken part at her good friend Father John's request.

"Ole Miss very po'ly, indeed, to-night, very po'ly," said Aunt Nance, who had been watching the invalid during her daughter's absence. "Take a mouty little shake to make her drap into de graveyard now. I dun give her de las' ob de wine 'fore she went to sleep, an' dar's a letter come, honey. I'se allus skeered ob letters, dey brings so much worry and trouble. I dun kep' it fur you."

And brave little Betty opened the letter to find in it a warning that the mortgage on the place was about to be foreclosed unless some payment could be made at once.

Betty cried herself to sleep that night in very despair, and the brown eyes were still heavy and weary when Father John stepped up on the rose-wreathed porch for his weekly visit to her mother. He was not alone to-day. Beside him glittered the buttons and epaulets of the handsome young officer whose sins had been quite forgotten in the succeeding sorrows of the past night.

"Miss Betty, this is Mr. Jack Neville—one of the dearest of my 'old boys,' was Father John's cheery greeting. "He tells me he had the misfortune to offend you most unintentionally last night, and he has begged this introduction that he may explain and apologize. So have it out between you while I go in and see

mother," concluded Father John, smiling benignantly, as he thought what a charming young pair it was that stood facing each other under the Bretherton roses.

"I can not blame you for thinking me either a fool or a cad last night, Miss Bretherton," her visitor began, with manly directness. "The truth of the matter is, I lost my head when I saw that bowl, for I am in the dickens of a fix for having broken one exactly like it. My mother is an Englishwoman, one of the Lesters, of Devon, an old family burdened with all sorts of troublesome traditions. Last spring an aged aunt, who was my mother's nearest relative, died, and left her, among other things, a punch or 'wassail bowl,' as it was called, that had been an heirloom in the family for generations. It was called 'Lester's Luck,' and had never been used except for such especially festive occasions as betrothals, weddings, and christenings. Some ridiculous superstition gave the bowl a fictitious value, and my dear mother, though a most sensible woman in all other respects, had been bred with a solemn regard for all family traditions, so that the legacy was looked upon by her as almost a sacred trust.

"Knowing that we were to stop in Liverpool, she asked me to bring over the treasure, which she could not commit to ordinary modes of transportation, and in an unlucky moment I agreed. All went well until one night, when a group of us were gathered in the mess-room of the 'Columbia,' and the conversation turned on old china. We were chaffing our chief engineer, who had just been 'done' most wofully by an English dealer, who had unloaded a lot of trash on him for genuine Dresden.

"He declared we knew no more about the subject than he did, and to clinch a rather heated argument I brought out my bowl to show him a specimen of the real thing. Just as I put it on the table the 'Columbia' struck a head sea, and gave a lurch that shook us all up, sent the bowl crashing to the floor, and wrecked the 'Lester's Luck' forever. I have not yet dared write home and confess the tragedy, for so my dear mother will regard it. I have been scouring half a dozen cities for a counterpart of the bowl, but found nothing until I saw that in your booth last night. Of

course I did not dream it was your personal property, or I would not have presumed as I did. And you will understand my eagerness better, perhaps, when I tell you my mother is in poor health, and I fear the superstition attached to the bowl may have a serious effect upon her. The tradition goes that without the bowl there will never more be a wedding or christening in the family—in other words, that with 'Lester's Luck' the race becomes extinct."

"How strange!" said Betty. "The very same story goes with our bowl. And my great-great-grandmother was a Lester."

"Then we must be cousins," said Jack, eagerly.

"Very distant ones," answered Betty, demurely.

"The sort of distance that lends enchantment," answered Jack, gallantly. "So am I forgiven, Cousin Betty?"

"There is nothing to forgive," she said, and the sweet face grew sad and serious. "We are too poor to be proud. If you choose to buy our bowl you can have it."

Jack felt his heart and head both going rapidly.

"Name your price then, Cousin Betty."

"Would—one hundred dollars—as you said last night—be too much?" asked Betty, with uncommercial timidity.

"Too much!" and Jack, who had gleaned hints of the situation from Father John, threw wisdom to the winds.

"I had no idea of the worth of the bowl last night when I made that absurd bid. One hundred dollars is not a fraction of its value."

"Oh, isn't it?" exclaimed Betty, eagerly.

"It would be robbing you to take it at three hundred," said Jack, well aware he could purchase a finer piece of china for twenty-five dollars at any dealer's in Christendom.

"Oh!" said Betty, her sweet face flushing with a delighted surprise that made the purchaser long to offer her his whole patrimony on the spot.

"I really could not conscientiously offer you less than five hundred dollars," continued Jack with business gravity.

"Five hundred dollars!" Betty could not speak for a moment

with amazement and blissful relief. Surely the good angels were managing this for her. Five hundred dollars! It would pay the mortgage, it would keep her home, it might save her beloved mother.

"Oh, that is too much," she said, breathlessly.

"Not a cent," replied Jack, decidedly. "Remember, it's the 'Lester's Luck' I am buying back."

"And that I am losing," answered Betty, gaily.

"Not if I can help it," vowed Jack, under his breath, as he looked into the lovely face dimpling into smiles and radiance as the weight of the mortgage rolled from pretty Betty forever.

And Jack kept his vow, as such a sturdy son of Uncle Sam should.

When the Bretherton roses bloomed next June they decked a bridal altar in Father John's chapel, and the orphans scattered the fragrant petals on the path to the old Hall, making a flowery highway for the brown-eyed bride and the gallant groom.

Two frail, sweet mothers lured back to health and happiness by their children's tenderness, presided at the wedding-feast, where, wreathed with undying roses and brimming with rare wine, stood the old bowl: Betty's wedding-present from Jack's mother—who never guessed its story—the "Lester's Luck" that had united two beautiful young lives.

A PIECE OF PINK RIBBON.

BY EMMA HOWARD WIGHT.

THE sky was gray and there were flurries of snow in the air.

"Looks like a snowstorm," said Experience, as she stopped by the window.

"I don't reckon a little snow will stand in the way of the folks' coming," said Mrs. Hardy, lifting a flushed face from the turkey she was basting. "This here birthday dinner of your pa's is as regular looked to as Thanksgiving day or Christmas. He began a-celebratin' his birthdays twenty years ago to-day, and he's kept it up pretty stiddy ever since." She paused suddenly with a glance at her daughter's face, pale and sad against the gray light from the window. "I do believe that Experience be still a-frettin' after John Wilkins," thought Mrs. Hardy. "Twenty years ago to-night since she last sot eyes on him, and the next day he went away so sudden-like. I never knowed what it was came atwixt him and Experience. She never said nothing, but she ain't never been the same since. And she ain't never married, though it warn't for lack of opportunities. Thar's Hiram Watts! He was dead sot on Experience, but she wouldn't have nothing to say to him, so he went off and married Jane Sary Phelps. Jane Sary's been dead nigh on to eight years now, and it's my belief that Experience could have Hiram any day if she'd just say the word. Elmiry," to the red-haired help, "I don't know as we ought to put any brandy in them mince pies, bein' as Brother Ames is a-comin'."

"Lor', Mis' Hardy, mince pies ain't mince pies 'ceptin' they's got brandy in 'em," cried Elmiry.

"Well, they is more tasty with the brandy, of course," admitted Mrs. Hardy. "But them pies do smell powerful strong, Elmiry. You ain't stinted none with the brandy, that's plain."

The big, old-fashioned clock in the corner began to strike.

"Ten o'clock!" exclaimed Mrs. Hardy. "You'd better be a-dressin', Experience; it won't be very long before the folks'll be comin'."

In the hall Tom, the hired man, was piling the great fireplace with logs.

"Looks mighty like a snowstorm, Miss Experience," he said, as Experience passed on her way up stairs. "It's mighty cold, too; so I am calculatin' on a good, rousing fire."

Experience passed up the wide, shallow stairway to her own room. She opened a clothes press and took down a gray gown, laying it across the back of a chair. Then she stood looking down upon it for a moment. Crossing the room then, she opened an old chest which stood in an alcove and lifted out a faded pink gown trimmed about the low-cut neck, and elbow sleeves, with yellow lace.

Twenty years ago that day a blue-eyed, pink-cheeked girl, with gold-brown curls, had worn that gown. How becoming the rose hue had been to the girl's fair, dimpled beauty; how white and rounded had been the neck and arms softened by the yellow lace.

Experience dropped the gown and went up to her dressing-table. A sigh left her lips as she studied her face in the looking-glass. Twenty years had changed the girl into a woman with the pink faded from her cheeks, the brightness gone from her eyes, and many a silver thread in the gold-brown hair.

"He wouldn't know me if he saw me now, I reckon," she murmured, and fell to thinking of that day, twenty years ago, when happiness and hope had gone out of her life with John Wilkins. How plainly she could see him with his grave, handsome face, wavy brown hair and stalwart form. They were celebrating her father's birthday just as they were going to do to-day. How hard John had tried to speak with her alone. But partly through shyness and also with a touch of coquetry, she had thwarted him. At length he had slipped into her hand a hastily written note. With burning cheeks and quickly beating heart she ran away to her room to read it.

"Experience, I love you and I have been trying all day to tell you so. Will you be my wife, dear? If so, slip into my hand that piece of pink ribbon which ties back your pretty curls. Lovingly, John."

With shy, smiling eyes she looked into the glass at the piece of pink ribbon. It was quaint and old-fashioned, pink rosebuds embroidered upon a silk ground.

"I'll not give it to him until just before he leaves," she murmured.

During the rest of the day she knew John Wilkins' eyes were fixed wistfully and anxiously upon her, but she would give no sign. She allowed Hiram Watts to linger by her side and she smiled upon him when she knew John was looking. She loved John, but she possessed her share of woman's coquetry. Then the folks began to depart, and she heard Hiram say to John, for they had driven over together: "I'll go get the trap," and they both left the house.

Then Experience had slipped the ribbon from her hair and ran to the door. The tall form of a man stood upon the porch in the darkness and the snow. Experience's cheeks burned, though the air was icy, as she crept up to him and slipped the ribbon into his hand. Then she ran swiftly back into the house.

The next day, without a word, John Wilkins went away, and from that day to the present she had never heard aught of or from him. She could arrive at no explanation of his conduct, but she had never ceased to love him, and that was why she had sent Hiram Watts and others away.

The guests commenced to arrive as Experience went down stairs. Hiram Watts and his daughter, Jane, came late. Jane was quite a pretty girl, blue-eyed and fair-haired.

"It was so cold I had to bundle up," she said to Experience, as she stood before the looking-glass untying her hood.

Experience was staring at the girl. The color had left her cheeks and lips. Twined in Jane's fair hair was the piece of pink ribbon she, Experience, thought she had given to John Wilkins twenty years before.

"For the land's sake, Miss Experience, what's the matter?" cried Jane, as she caught sight of Experience's pale face in the glass. "Are you sick?"

"Where did you get that ribbon?" asked Experience, hoarsely.

Jane stared. Experience's face was white and her hands trembled.

"Why, I found it among some things of father's," replied Jane. "I reckon it belonged to mother, for he seemed to prize it like. It just matched my pink sash, so I thought I'd wear it."

"Give that ribbon to me," said Experience, her soft voice strangely stern.

"Did you say I was to give my ribbon to you, Miss Experience?" asked the bewildered Jane.

"Yes," replied Experience, "that piece of ribbon is mine. I do not know how your father came by it. I am sure, however, he would be angry if he saw you wearing it."

"I don't know what it's all about," murmured Jane, sulkily, as she drew the ribbon from her hair and handed it to Experience.

Many times during the hours that followed Hiram Watts' eyes sought Experience, pale and quiet in her soft gray gown. Once her eyes met his with a strange look in them which quickened his pulses. Some new expression replaced the old indifference. Perhaps if he spoke again she would listen. He had never ceased to love her. In the afternoon he found her standing alone in front of the fireplace in the hall. The light played over her soft gray gown, her pale, faded face, and brought out the gold in her hair. He looked at her with a passionate light in his eyes. In the bloom and freshness of her girlhood she had never seemed fairer, sweeter, more desirable. He had watched the years change her from a blooming, pink-cheeked girl into a faded, gray-haired woman and his love had never wavered.

He moved to her side and murmured her name:

"Experience!"

She lifted her eyes to his face and looked at him steadily.

"I am glad you are here, for I want to speak to you," she

said. "I want to ask you how this came into your possession," and she held up the piece of pink ribbon.

A cry left his lips and a swift pallor crossed his face.

"Where—where did you get it?" he faltered.

"Your daughter wore it in her hair," replied Experience. "She says it is yours. Twenty years ago I gave this piece of ribbon to John Wilkins. Did he give it to you?"

"No; you gave it to me yourself."

"What do you mean?" she murmured, bewilderedly.

"It was me standin' on the porch that night, not John," he explained. "He had gone to get the trap."

She caught her breath with a sob.

"I understand now why he went away without a word," she murmured. "He never knew."

"No; he never knew," repeated Hiram Watts, in a low voice. "He told me on the way home that he was goin' away the next day and why he was goin'."

She looked up at him with a passion of reproach in her eyes.

"And you never told him?" she cried.

"I loved you," he replied, doggedly, "and I thought if he went away you might in time learn to care for me."

"Thank God, I never did," she cried, passionately. "Thank God, I have loved only John Wilkins all these years."

While she was speaking the door had quietly opened and a tall man, the snow lying thick upon his broad shoulders, stood upon the threshold. The two before the fire were unaware of his presence. He stood very still listening.

"No; it never done me no good, the keepin' of that there ribbon," said Hiram Watts. "Experience, I done it because I loved you. Won't you say you don't quite hate me for it? I wouldn't have done it if I had knowed that your heart would cling to him all these years. I love you too well to have spoiled your life like that."

"No; I don't hate you," she answered, wearily; "that would not undo the past. Now, will you please go away? I would rather be alone."

He turned and went away. The other man came softly to her side.

"Experience!"

She looked up at him wildly, incredulously.

"John!"

"Yes; it is I, dear love," he replied. "I came back, Experience, because the longing to look again upon your face was too strong for me. I stood there at the door listening, and I understand. Experience, happiness has come to us after twenty years."

He took her in his arms and she buried her face on his breast. She looked up as his lips touched her hair. Her cheeks were pink, her eyes were all alight. To him she was as fair as she had been twenty years before. He bent his head and kissed her upon the lips.

She smiled and he felt something soft slip into his hand. He looked down and the firelight showed him a piece of pink ribbon.

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